

## Indian high-skilled migrants and international students in Germany: migration behaviors, intentions and development effects

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A young man and woman are smiling and looking at a laptop screen. The woman is on the left, with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored top. The man is on the right, with short dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. They are both looking down at the laptop, which is in the foreground. The background is a blurred indoor setting with large windows and greenery outside.

# Indian high-skilled migrants and international students in Germany

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and development effects



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Thomas Faist, Mustafa Aksakal, Kerstin Schmidt

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# Preface

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If well managed, migration can generate mutual benefits for migrants, destination countries and countries of origin. For migrants, it can improve their standard of living, expand skill sets and improve social mobility. For destination countries, it can promote innovation, alleviate demographic pressures, generate fiscal gains and foster cultural exchange. Countries of origin can benefit through remittances, knowledge transfers, investments and improved business relations.

Germany and India have a long history of intellectual and economic cooperation. The people-to-people exchange between the two countries has, however, been underwhelming. This has changed in the recent past with increasing numbers of highly skilled Indians moving to Germany for higher education and professional work. Indian nationals represent 17 percent of the 28,008 skilled third-country economic migrants who entered Germany in 2015. Thus, India is the most important origin country for skilled economic migrants from third countries to Germany – ahead of the United States, China, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.

Germany would benefit from higher levels of skilled migration due to the demographic changes the country faces. In addition, when compared with other countries, economic migration to Germany is relatively low: Calculations by the OECD reveal that countries such as the United Kingdom and Canada experience almost three times the permanent economic migration that Germany does. Given the right wing, xenophobic movements in the US and UK (the leading destinations for Indian professionals); Germany would do well to position itself as an open and welcoming society.

Against this backdrop, the study at hand, written by Thomas Faist, Mustafa Aksakal and Kerstin Schmidt of the University of Bielefeld, examines motivations, intentions of stay and development effects of migration from India to Germany for economic and education purposes.

The study shows that economic and education migration from India has increased in recent years, reflecting the continuous liberalization of German immigration laws and the strength of the German labor market. In addition, Indians are staying longer in Germany than they did a few years ago. Amongst the main motivations to migrate and stay here are professional development and better career prospects, it's relatively open society and the good integration prospects. Thus, Germany has become more attractive for Indian migrants.

At the same time, there are still obstacles for Indians to overcome. Felt distance to the local population, experiences of discrimination and difficulties with the German bureaucracy may complicate the migration experience. The prospects of staying are also influenced by factors emanating from the migrants' home country. While migrating to Germany can boost personal independence and emancipation, family ties may also trigger an eventual return to India. Migration to Germany also holds significant development potential for Indian society, for instance because of knowledge and skill transfers and remittances. We hope that this study will encourage decision makers in the political, administrative, academic and business spheres to improve the migration experience of skilled migrants and students from India and, at the same time, increase Germany's attractiveness as a destination country. The lessons learned from focusing on India are also applicable to other origin countries. A new Immigration Act (Einwanderungsgesetz) could help attract more skilled workers to Germany. Despite the high number of refugees who have recently arrived and the surge of right-wing populism, it is crucial that German society remains open to migration from India and elsewhere.

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# Executive summary

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This report presents the main findings of an empirical study examining the motivations of Indian high-skilled migrants and international students who come to Germany to work and study, as well as their intentions for staying in Germany, returning to India or moving on to another destination. In order to address these two analytical realms, the study consists of two parts.

The first part provides an overview of migration trends, policies and useful concepts for understanding high-skilled migrants' and international students' motives and experiences related to their stay in Germany, as well as their future plans. It underlines the growing importance of Germany as a destination for both international students and high-skilled migrants based on data about past and present Indian immigration to Germany. Although Indian immigration to Germany is not a new phenomenon, more recent inflows to Germany differ in both quantitative and qualitative terms from previous ones. For instance, the number of Indian migrants in Germany increased between 1990 and 2015 by 100,79 per cent from around 32,000 to 68,000 persons (UN DESA, 2015) with a considerable increase after 2000 (Federal Statistical Office, 2011), when policies became more open with respect to skilled migration.

In 2014, the large majority of 96.5 per cent of Indian immigrants came to Germany to occupy high-skilled jobs, 85 per cent of whom were male (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2015b). According to German census data, most Indian high-skilled migrants are relatively young and in the economically productive age range between 18 and 49 years (Federal Statistical Office, 2011). The majority of high-skilled migrants are occupied in IT sciences or engineering.

Likewise, the number of international students from India has significantly increased and India became the second most important country of origin of international students in Germany in 2015 (Heublein et al., 2016). Most international students from India are enrolled in programs

in the natural sciences, math, informatics and technology. Statistical data indicate that around 18 per cent of the Indian students who arrived in Germany in 2014 left the country in the subsequent two years. In contrast, in the same time period the number of Indian professionals who engaged in return or onward migration was much higher at 57 per cent.

Although Germany was the third most popular destination for Indian immigrants to Europe in 2015 after the UK and Italy (UN DESA, 2015), Indian immigration to Germany is still a small-scale phenomenon compared to the UK, with migration flows of about 776,000 in 2015 (UN DESA, 2015), and the US, with more than 1.5 million in 2014 (Department of Homeland Security, 2015).

Data from the Central Register of Foreigners (Ausländerzentralregister) illustrate that an increasing share of particularly international students and to a lesser extent high-skilled migrants from India tend to stay in Germany for several years. In the case of international students, 29 per cent of those who arrived in 2010 left Germany again between 2010 and 2012. Yet, of those students from India who arrived in 2014, only 20 per cent left the country again until the beginning of 2017.<sup>1</sup> A similar trend is observable for Indian high-skilled migrants: While 69 per cent of those who arrived in 2010 left again between 2010 and 2012, only 58 per cent of those who arrived in 2014 left until the beginning of 2017. Interestingly, high-skilled migrants who hold an EU BlueCard tend to stay longer in Germany than those who entered based on Article 18 of the German Residence Act.

A review of policy reports and legal documents shows how legal frameworks, particularly since 2005, have developed towards more open, but also more selective, immigration and integration laws for high-skilled migrants and

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<sup>1</sup> Data for 2017 are considered until February 28.



international students. While high-skilled and student migration is often understood as being of a temporary nature, there are increasing options for longer-term and permanent settlement in Germany for those who are able to successfully integrate into the labor market, especially in those sectors that are currently said to be experiencing labor shortages.

Moreover, Germany is compared with the UK and the US with respect to important developments in immigration and integration policies, because the latter nations represent two of the most important destination countries for Indian immigrants. The comparative analysis of Germany and the US shows that very similar legal developments have occurred in recent decades as immigration policies have become more tolerant towards international students and professionals who can compensate for shortages in various sectors. In the UK, similar immigration policies have been implemented; after 2011, however, they became highly restricted for high-skilled migrants, and more selective for international students.

The literature review for the case of Germany shows that only few studies on contemporary Indian immigration to Germany exist, despite the strong interest in the subject expressed in several recent policy reports. Nevertheless, some insights can be derived from findings on the motivations to go to Germany and satisfaction with life in Germany, as well as on intentions regarding the length of stay in the context of the GreenCard in the 1990s, and with respect to more recent immigration of high-skilled migrants and students from various countries of origin.

Likewise, there seems to be a lack of social science studies in particular that are able to provide an in-depth and multi-perspective view of the topics relevant to Indian students and high-skilled migrants in Germany. The present research aims to fill this gap by considering different perspectives, namely those of high-skilled migrants, international students, experts and employers with regard to the criteria used to choose Germany as destination, the intentions regarding the length of stay and the development potentials. The analysis of the results is guided by different concepts that help to explain social dynamics in relation to the migrants, the destination country and the country of origin.

The second part offers a discussion of the most relevant empirical results in order to answer the study's guiding questions, considering and contrasting the different viewpoints of migrants, experts and employers. The empirical findings are organized analytically in three

spheres: personal factors, factors related to India and factors related to Germany.

The results show that 12 out of 21 interviewed migrants said the most important personal motivations for studying or working in Germany were related to social mobility. More than 85 per cent of the professionals associated their migration with better and accelerated career development opportunities, followed by the intention to improve their economic situation, something that was not, however, always achieved. In addition to these factors, around 40 per cent of all interviewees said that non-career and non-economic aspects are of at least equal importance. These are often associated with a better life, including better environmental conditions, efficient public infrastructure and transportation, a more beneficial social security system and the perception of security, as well as a fair tax regime. Indian female migrants in particular associated their improved lives with increasing independence from patriarchal structures in their homeland. However, communication issues, resulting from low levels of German language proficiency, led to feelings of exclusion among 10 interviewees. Language issues were also found to be strongly linked to the limitation in envisaged social mobility in Germany. These factors not only influenced the migrants in their decisions to select Germany as a destination, but also represent central aspects affecting considerations of the length of stay.

There are also some factors related to India as a source country. One important factor leading to the choice of Germany as a destination, especially among international students, is related to social class. Due to low tuition fees in Germany in comparison to the US and UK, especially those international students from middle class families in India tend to study in Germany. Other aspects have also contributed in recent years to expanding infrastructures that result in Germany being chosen as a destination. These include German recruitment and marketing strategies in India, such as hiring programs; scholarships; German schools; and increasing investments on the part of German companies. In the case of professionals, a relevant channel bringing them to Germany is intra-company transfers.

Social responsibility towards parents and family members who stayed at home represents an important factor for five interviewees regarding their intentions in terms of length of stay. Finally, loyalty to India as a country seems to be a relevant aspect among more than 50 per cent of the interviewed Indian students and professionals, potentially leading them to return to their native country.

Several aspects related to Germany also influenced the decisions to choose the country as a destination and to stay or leave. An important factor attracting international students and high-skilled migrants was the good reputation of the German educational system and of some universities and the technical infrastructure in certain labor sectors, often related to expectations of positive career development. According to four experts and employers, prospective migrants were aware of increasing levels of violence against migrants; however, this knowledge did not translate into decisions not to choose Germany as a destination. Considerations regarding the length of stay related to different aspects of cultural integration into German society and integration into the labor market, as well as within company structures. Employers and Indian migrants expressed diverging views about some of these aspects, including the integration into society, the importance of bureaucratic hurdles and the working conditions in companies. With respect to the integration into German society, 45 per cent of migrants said they enjoyed their life in Germany, particularly in big cities, while the rest of the interviewees expressed feelings of exclusion and non-acceptance by Germans. Employers were not aware of these difficulties, often reducing the challenge of integration to language barriers. While some companies actively tried to enhance the exchange between Indian and German colleagues and their families, others refrained from organizing any activities, arguing that Indian professionals did not wish to engage with Germans in their free time and preferred to socialize with other Indians, which they also perceived as a source of social support. In addition, bureaucratic procedures were perceived by 90 per cent of migrants and employers as highly complicated and challenging. However, those migrants who benefited from formal support provided by companies or universities or informal support offered by members of their own social networks did not perceive any difficulties with respect to administrative procedures. This view was shared by two out of eight interviewed employers who argued that German legislation and administrative procedures were relatively friendly towards high-skilled and student migrants, particularly in comparison to other destination countries.

With respect to the working conditions, around 50 per cent of the professionals interviewed highlighted the positive aspects; three, however, thought that their career development was hampered by inflexible structures. An additional factor, which might result in dissatisfaction with the professional environment among high-skilled migrants, is the perception on the part of migrants that employers and German colleagues do not appreciate

proactive behavior. While four out of eight interviewed professionals expressed these concerns, almost all employers stressed their satisfaction with the high levels of commitment and flexibility shown by Indian high-skilled migrants, but said they would appreciate additional personal initiative. There thus seems to be a lack of communication at the personal level between employees and employers, while, at the same time, employers in general acknowledged the value of different working cultures in India and Germany. The general high levels of satisfaction among employers with the work ethic and dedication of Indian professionals is particularly relevant in light of concerns expressed by three experts that high-skilled migrants from India are sometimes underpaid in comparison to their German colleagues. Finally, internship positions were considered by five experts and two employers as crucial in the study-to-work transition. Three out of nine Indian students, however, found the access to adequate internships very difficult because they did not know how to contact companies that might be interested in their skills. Due to this obstacle, two of them also expected difficulties in finding employment after graduation.

These motivations, experiences and perceptions also have important impacts on the social mobility of migrants and on the development potential in Germany and India. As the results show, aspirations of upward social mobility, as a reason for moving to Germany to work or to study, often go beyond material and career-related aspects and also include personal well-being. However, the realization of many aspects of social mobility is often hampered by a lack of language skills and knowledge of German society. Social capital in Germany can help to overcome some of these hurdles as they relate to bureaucratic processes and integration into society. This seems to be of particular relevance even before arrival or shortly thereafter. During the stay, however, social capital, both in India and elsewhere, was used by 70 per cent of all interviewed migrants to compensate for feelings of non-acceptance in Germany and to enhance careers. Therefore, limited access to social capital could create social inequalities based on restricted opportunities for career advancement, but also based on perceptions of isolation and exclusion. Seven of the interviewed migrants referred to the more favorable conditions in other countries, such as the UK or US, with respect to the existence of strong Indian migrant communities which might serve as sources of social capital. Given the fact that many high-skilled migrants and international students from India in Germany belong to the upper or at least middle class, individual financial remittances play a less important role and are often

reduced to more symbolic exchanges in the form of gifts. Transnational links to India can also be beneficial for the development of the country's economy when professionals or graduates return to work in companies in India or establish their own local or transnational businesses. However, regional disparities might be reinforced because investments and the establishment of start-ups are more likely to take place in already vibrant regions. More remote areas of India, in contrast, are less likely to benefit from these development outcomes.

Next to the often discussed benefits of filling gaps in the labor market and compensating for demographic issues, 40 per cent of the experts said they see high-skilled migration from India as beneficial given its potential to culturally enrich German society. With respect to the labor market, it was argued that knowledge exchange could be enhanced, while the internationalization of higher education was also welcomed. In that respect, it was remarked that international students and high-skilled migrants from India are often concentrated in cities in which technical or engineering programs are offered and in which companies in the high-tech sector are based. There is still reluctance by traditional SMEs to employ Indian high-skilled migrants because of the perceived administrative hurdles and the fear of difficulties during the integration process. As a consequence, traditional SMEs, particularly in rural areas, which still represent a large share of the German economy, might not be able to benefit from the transfer of knowledge and skills brought by Indian high-skilled migrants and university graduates.

# 1. Introduction

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Asian immigration to Germany has a long history, but started to increase significantly after the 1960s (Oltmer, 2012). Between 1949 and 1989, when Germany was divided into two political hemispheres, an important motive of both governments for engaging in the recruitment of immigrants from Asia was to overcome labor scarcities. However, the relevant source countries, numbers and immigration policies differed (Treibel, 2008; Gruner-Domic, 1999).

Immigration from India took place mostly to West Germany and started as early as the 1950s, when predominately Indian students arrived in order to enroll in German universities. In subsequent years, labor migrants, asylum seekers and family migrants entered the country in addition to students (Goel, Punnamparambil & Punnamparambil-Wolf, 2012). The number of Indian migrants gradually increased after 2000 in particular. This was especially due to the rising number of international students and high-skilled migrants.

International students can be defined as migrants who have left their country of origin and moved to another country with the goal of pursuing education (OECD, 2013a; UNESCO, 2006). Student mobility can be distinguished between credit and degree mobility: While credit mobility refers to international students who carry out an exchange semester at a foreign host university, degree mobility refers to the enrollment in an entire course of study abroad (Crains, 2014; King & Raghuram, 2013). In contrast, high-skilled migrants can be defined as individuals who possess “a university degree or extensive/equivalent experience in a given field” (Iredale, 2001: 8). The sectors in which these migrants can be employed are manifold, with employers varying from local private small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to large multinational corporations, and can also include the public sector, e.g. education and health care (Cerna, 2010).

Statistics indicate that particularly English-speaking countries, such as the US and UK, still attract the large

majority of Indian migrants from these categories (ONS, 2016; US Census Bureau, 2016). However, Germany has recently become increasingly attractive as a destination country for Indian students and professionals. India was thus the top sending country of high-skilled migrants in 2014 (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2015a) and the second most important origin country of international students to Germany in 2015 (Heublein et al., 2016). While these numbers indicate the significance of Indian migration to Germany in recent years, there is as yet little detailed knowledge about why Indian professionals and students choose Germany as a destination country. In addition, the few existing studies offer no clear evidence regarding the factors influencing the duration of stay, with recent studies indicating conflicting trends in this area (Bruder et al., 2015; Höfer, Herting & Best, 2015).

Moreover, there is no detailed information about the multiple beneficial outcomes – for migrants, countries of origin and countries of destination – as a result of Indian student and high-skilled migration to Germany, which is the concept behind creating a triple win. This concept posits that international migrants can potentially advance in their personal careers and improve their socio-economic situation; sending countries can benefit from financial remittances, knowledge transfers, investments and the resulting business connections between receiving and sending countries achieved by migrants; and receiving countries can compensate for demographic issues, facilitate innovations and contribute to their cultural diversity (Azahaf, Kober & Mayer, 2015). While all three spheres are highly relevant to a triple-win, migrants have a special position, because they trigger these processes. In addition, they also represent the most vulnerable actors in this context. Therefore, particular attention has been paid to the role of migration policies in achieving fair outcomes for international migrants (Dräger & De Geus, 2015), something that is also considered in this study.

In line with the above, the main objective of this study is, on the one hand, to analyze the underlying motivations of international students and high-skilled migrants from India for choosing Germany as their destination, and, on the other, to grasp the manifold factors that shape their aspirations for the future and, consequently, their decisions on the duration of their stay. Based on this empirical foundation, the results were used to carry out an interpretative analysis of development outcomes. Reflecting the triple win described above, development outputs were analyzed for Indian migrants in Germany, for India and for Germany. These considerations lead to the following guiding research questions:

- What are the most important criteria for the selection of Germany as destination by high-skilled professionals and students from India?
- What are the most relevant factors that influence their decisions to stay in Germany, return to India or leave for another country?
- What are the most important development outcomes for high-skilled migrants and students, as well as for Indian society and German companies and regions?

From a methodological point of view, analyzing these questions from different angles would undoubtedly be beneficial, because it is likely that very different viewpoints coexist, viewpoints that must be addressed if a comprehensive picture is to be gained. Therefore, the study takes a multi-perspective approach, in which not only the viewpoints of high-skilled migrants and international students from India are considered, but also those of employers of Indian migrants and of experts in the field

Decisions to study or work and intentions to stay in Germany are most likely affected by multiple factors, which can be hypothesized as follows:

First, decisions to select Germany as a destination might relate to development disparities in the educational systems and labor markets in India and Germany. Because of these differences, Germany might serve as a magnet for potential immigrants who aspire to become part of its system or to gain experience abroad, i.e. to receive high-quality education and to participate in the German labor market. Second, with respect to aspects that potentially shape Indian immigrants' decisions on the length of stay in Germany, rationales might be related to economic, cultural and social aspects, or a combination of these factors. In

order to answer the research questions, the present study is divided into two parts and organized as follows:

The first part provides background information on numerical trends and immigration policies in Germany and in the traditional receiving countries; it also gives an overview of existing literature, reveals research gaps and introduces relevant concepts. Therefore, the first section of this part starts with an overview of past immigration to Germany and the second section discusses immigration policies. The subsequent section addresses the characteristics of recent immigration flows to Germany with particular emphasis on trends in immigration from India, followed by a brief comparison of the characteristics of Indian immigration to two of the most important destinations for Indian migrants, the UK and US. Against this background, the existing academic and policy-making literature and the most important findings on Indian migration to Germany are discussed. To conclude the first part of the report, research gaps are identified and relevant concepts for the empirical study are introduced.

The second part of the study is dedicated to the discussion of the empirical findings and is divided into two principal sections. The first section addresses the aspects relevant for choosing Germany as a destination and the factors that influence intentions in relation to the length of stay. In keeping with a triple-win perspective, the discussion on the noted selection criteria and intentions are divided into three subsections, namely aspects related to the migrants, to India and to Germany. Likewise, the second section is devoted to development outcomes that Indian migration to Germany implies. This section is also divided into three subsections, in which development is discussed in relation to migrants, to India and to Germany. Based on these new empirical insights, recommendations for policy-makers and employers of Indian professionals in Germany are also formulated.

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## PART ONE: Discussion on Indian migration, policies and concepts

# 2. Overview of past immigration to Germany

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Immigration to Germany has changed in terms of numbers and qualitative features (i.e. patterns, relevant migrant categories and countries of origin) in recent decades, something that is true for immigration from Asia in general and from India in particular.

Immigrants from Asia arriving after the Second World War included labor migrants and refugees from China, Vietnam, South Korea, the Philippines and India who came to both West and East Germany between 1949 and 1989. Asian labor migrants found employment in different sectors, but mostly in the branches of gastronomy, health care and mining in West Germany (Kreienbrink & Mayer, 2014; Christiansen & Xiujing, 2007) and in the industrial sectors in East Germany (Gruner-Domic, 1999).

Currently, Indian immigrants living in Germany are a highly heterogeneous diasporic community with regard to motivations for migration, regions of origin and ethnic and religious backgrounds (Goel, 2007). At least four major migrant categories can be traced historically: international students, labor migrants, asylum seekers and family migrants (Goel, Punnamparambil & Punnamparambil-Wolf, 2012). Especially during the 1950s, several thousand Indian students came to West Germany with the purpose of enrolling at university (Gottschlich, 2012). Next to the few professionals and entrepreneurs who immigrated from the 1950s onward to West Germany (Singh & Rajan, 2016), another inflow of labor migrants consisted of Indian nurses, who came to the country beginning in the 1960s, particularly from the Indian state of Kerala (Goel, 2002). In the early 1980s, Indian immigration was characterized by asylum seekers, who were mainly members of the Sikh ethnic group (Gottschlich, 2012). In addition to these early inflows, in the context of the German GreenCard initiative (*Sofortprogramm zur Deckung des IT-Fachkräftebedarfs*), high-skilled IT personnel were hired for a period of up to five years (Westerhoff, 2007). In the context of this program, between 2000 and 2004 around 18,000 IT experts

arrived in Germany, including 3,926 Indian IT specialists (Kolb, 2005).

A significant part of the above noted recruitment of immigrants from India and other Asian countries was driven by the existing scarcity of labor in the IT sectors in Germany. Discussions on labor market bottlenecks are still relevant; on the one hand, the situation is seen as a mismatch between the demand in the economy and the existing supply of labor (Zimmermann, 2013). This indicates that the labor force in Germany often does not reflect the expectations of certain sectors in the country. On the other hand, occupational shortages are associated with future challenges that Germany faces. In this discussion it is argued that demographic transitions and emerging labor gaps in certain sectors will have significant consequences for the future economic and social development of the country, and will affect the country's competitiveness in the global economy (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2011). Although some forecasts of demographic shifts exist, it is still unknown to what extent demographic developments will impact the country. Likewise, it seems to be relatively unclear why current labor shortages cannot be filled by local labor. Consequently, this leads to the question of which criteria underlie labor force demands in the German economy, an issue partly considered in the discussion of our findings.

What seems to be clear is that German immigration policies have been adapted in recent years to these ongoing conditions, which has led to a more tolerant but also selective legal framework for immigration, something that is discussed in the subsequent section. In light of this situation, certain migrant categories and countries of origin have become more important for Germany, including high-skilled immigrants (Kreienbrink & Mayer, 2014) and students from Asia. In terms of international students, the most important three countries of origin are China, India and South Korea; for high-skilled migrants, the top countries are India and China (Federal Office for Migrants and Refugees, 2016).



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### 3. Past and current immigration policies in Germany

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The positive economic situation in Germany after the Second World War stimulated the creation of temporary labor recruitment initiatives (guest worker programs) with the objective of attracting cheap and young workers from regions where labor was abundant to countries where it was, in some sectors, scarce. In West Germany the guest worker program, which ended in 1973, was mainly based on bilateral agreements (Akgündüz, 2012; Treibel, 2008). Similar political initiatives to attract foreign labor existed in East Germany; however these guest workers were recruited from different geographical areas, mainly from socialist sister states (Gruner-Domic, 1999).

The legal framework for admitting guest workers was founded mainly on the Foreigner Law (*Ausländergesetz*) of 1965. Major aspects covered by the law were the introduction of a residence permit for foreigners, regulations on asylum and deportation and regulations in the case of delinquent behavior by foreigners. Yet the law did not cover any aspects related to the integration of foreigners into society. The Foreigner Law also included a legal channel for the immigration of skilled migrants and international students, and thus facilitated the arrival of students and high-skilled migrants from India, which had already begun a few years after the end of the Second World War (Goel, 2007).

Beginning in the early 1970s, in conjunction with the end of the guest worker program and the subsequent ban on the recruitment of foreign labor, the West German government pursued the policy that Germany should not be considered an “immigration country”. With respect to migration from India, one important consequence was that the annual resident permits of many Indian nurses were not extended. Immigration for purposes other than work, such as family unification, studies and humanitarian protection, was still possible, and family reunification became one of the most important legal paths to immigration. However, the government did not welcome the arrival of

family members, which resulted, in the context of Indian migration, in the mainly well-educated husbands of the nurses from Kerala not receiving work permits for several years after their arrival in Germany (Goel, 2002).

As noted above, after 2000, in response to economic and demographic trends, the German government started to develop an active immigration policy, according to which a controlled immigration of high-skilled migrants was gradually allowed and in which high-skilled immigration from non-European countries started to play an increasingly important role (Mayer, 2013).

In line with this political development, one of the first formal initiatives to attract professionals to Germany was the German GreenCard program mentioned above. Although the German government’s expectations in terms of numbers were not met (Westerhoff, 2007), the political course was kept and resulted in the establishment of the New Foreigner Law (NFL) (*Neues Zuwanderungsgesetz*) in 2005 that, inter alia, institutionalized the privileged entrance of professionals. Article 1 of the NFL, also referred to as the Residence Act (*Aufenthaltsgesetz*), contains central aspects regarding the recruitment and integration of high-skilled migrants, and Article 18 allows the temporary entrance and employment of foreigners according to the needs of the labor market. In terms of high-skilled workers, this is the case for certain pre-defined occupations. In addition, exemptions can be granted when the employment of a foreign high-skilled worker in another profession is in the public interest. According to the NFL, with the exemption of tourist visas, after entering Germany with a short-term visa, an individual can request a long-term stay, in the form of either a temporary residence permit (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) or a perpetual settlement permit (*Niederlassungserlaubnis*) (Schneider & Parusel, 2011). Direct settlement permissions for high-skilled immigrants are regulated in Article 19 of the Residence Act. High-skilled migrants are defined in

this article to include researchers with particular specialist knowledge, and research staff in key positions.

Temporary residence permits can be granted for educational, occupational, humanitarian or family unification reasons; in contrast, perpetual settlement permits can be requested in combination with the fulfillment of other conditions (e.g. guarantee of the foreigners' subsistence, absence of a criminal record, sufficient knowledge of the language) after a five-year period (Schneider, 2007). In addition to Article 18 mentioned above, Article 20 of the Residence Act allows the temporary stay of those researchers who aim to work in cooperation with or within a German university or research institute. Moreover, the immigration of foreigners for the purpose of establishing a business is regulated by Article 21 of the Residence Act. The Residence Act also originally foresaw that international students should have the right to stay for a further year after graduation so they could find adequate employment. Since 2012 this period has been prolonged to 18 months (Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012). Social integration into the host country is another important aspect foreseen by the NFL, including learning German and studying aspects related to life in Germany (Schneider, 2007).

The law on the regulation of labor migration (*Arbeitsmigrationssteuerungsgesetz*) of 2008 is an amendment to the Residence Act aiming to further attract foreign professionals by reducing the income limit for high-skilled persons who receive an immediate residence permit from €86,500 to €63,600 (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2008). This change to the Residence Act also improved the recognition of foreign professional qualifications (university degrees), facilitating in particular the recognition procedures for citizens from non-European countries.

The legal framework was expanded by the implementation of the EU-Directive for High-qualified Immigrants, or BlueCard (*Umsetzung der EU-Hochqualifizierten-Richtlinie*) in the national Residence Act in August 2012, as defined in Article 19a (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2014a). The objective of the BlueCard was to create a particular residence permit for high-skilled workers on the EU-level in order to better address the prevailing shortage of high-skilled workers by further reducing the remaining bureaucratic barriers (Wogart & Schüller, 2011). The BlueCard was originally designed to enable temporary stays of up to four years; however, under certain preconditions permanent residence permits are issued (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2014b). In addition to a

formally recognized qualification, foreign professionals need to prove they have an "annual minimum gross salary of currently €47,600" (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2014b), an amount which was originally specified for 2014 but which was increased in 2015 to €49,600 (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2015c). Exceptions exist for so-called bottleneck occupations, i.e. those requiring professionals such as engineers, scientists, mathematicians, doctors and IT-experts, where the minimum gross salary is €38,688 (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2015c). Article 18c of the Residence Act also permits the entrance of foreign professionals who have the objective of searching for a job. An entry visa allows stays of up to six months, whereby proof of a secure livelihood is required (Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012).

In sum, since 2000 Germany has increasingly endeavored to recruit high-skilled migrants from non-European countries. Since 2005 several legal reforms have been carried out to facilitate the entrance of professionals, and on these grounds it can be argued that Germany currently represents one of European Union member states with the "least restrictions on the employment oriented immigration of highly-skilled workers" (OECD, 2013b: 15). The above legal measures aim to respond to the expected adverse impacts of demographic change (populations which are aging and which will shrink in the long term) that most European countries will face in the future. Accordingly, through the NFL and the following related reforms, mechanisms for promoting immigration from non-EU countries were created that are, however, selective in nature. These legal changes have also shaped the characteristics of immigration from India to Germany in recent years, both quantitatively and qualitatively, a development that will be discussed in the next section.



## 4. Current Indian migration to Germany

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) (2015), there were more than 15.5 million Indians living abroad in 2015. Although Indian immigrants are widely dispersed almost all over the world, they are particularly concentrated in the Gulf region, Southeast Asia, North America and Europe (UN DESA, 2015). As Figure 1 shows, Germany is currently the European country with the largest number of Indian immigrants after the UK and Italy.

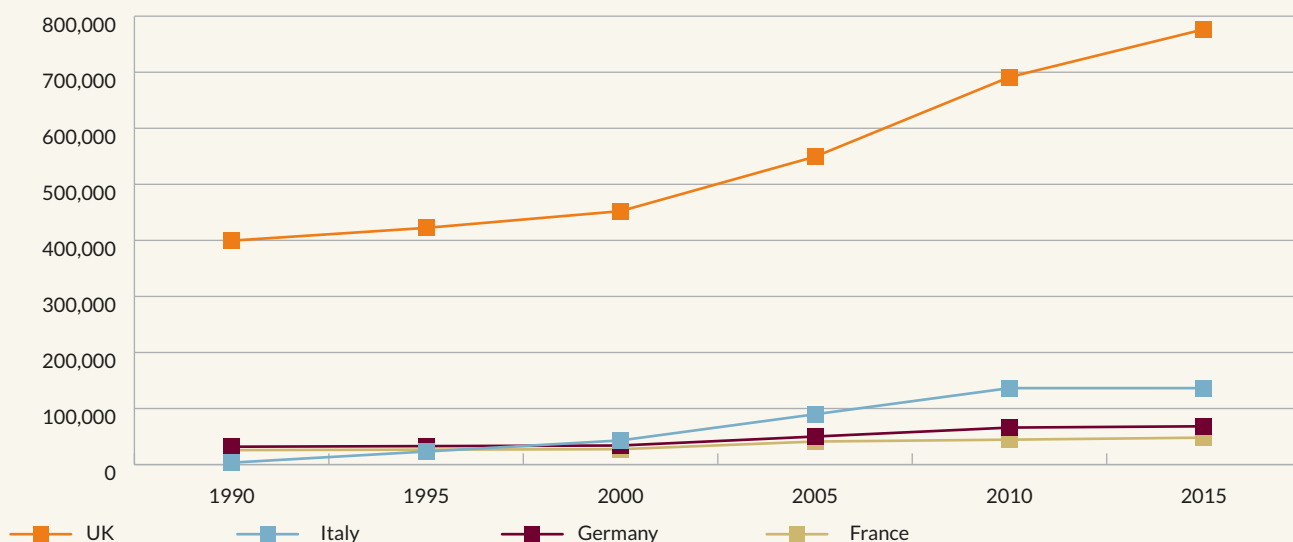
According to the information provided by UN DESA, migrant stocks of Indian nationals in Germany increased from almost 32,000 in 1990 to 68,000 in 2015, a rise of more than 100,79 per cent.

Moreover, German census data for the year 2011 show that around 65 per cent of the total Indian population is represented by foreign-born Indian immigrants and one-

third by Indians born in Germany. In addition, according to the Federal Statistical Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt*) (2011) around 64 per cent of foreign-born Indian immigrants are situated in the productive age group of 18–49 years. It is worth noting that German citizens of Indian extraction are not included in these numbers. According to the Federal Statistical Office (2015; 2011) 10,843 Indians received German citizenship between 2005 and 2015, which indicates that, in total, there is a significant number of German citizens of Indian heritage.

While migrant-stock trends show the demographic development of the total Indian population living in Germany, they do not reflect inflows and outflows. In order to depict this aspect, the following figure shows the annual Indian migrant flows to and from Germany between 1960 and 2014.

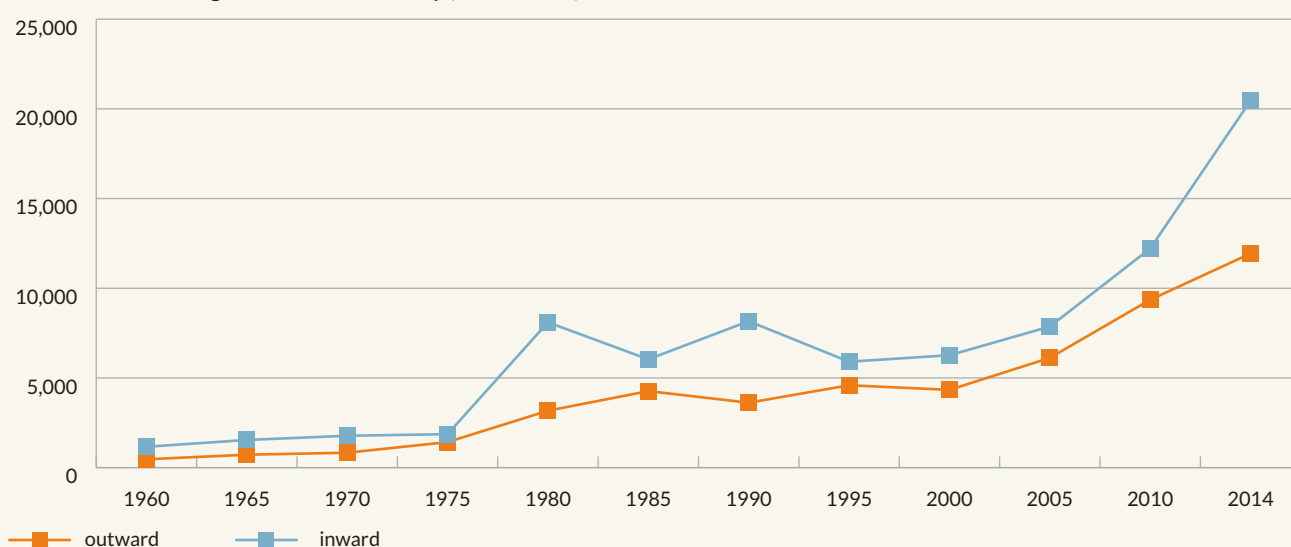
FIGURE 1 Indian migrant stocks in most important four European countries (1990–2015)



Source: UN DESA, 2015.

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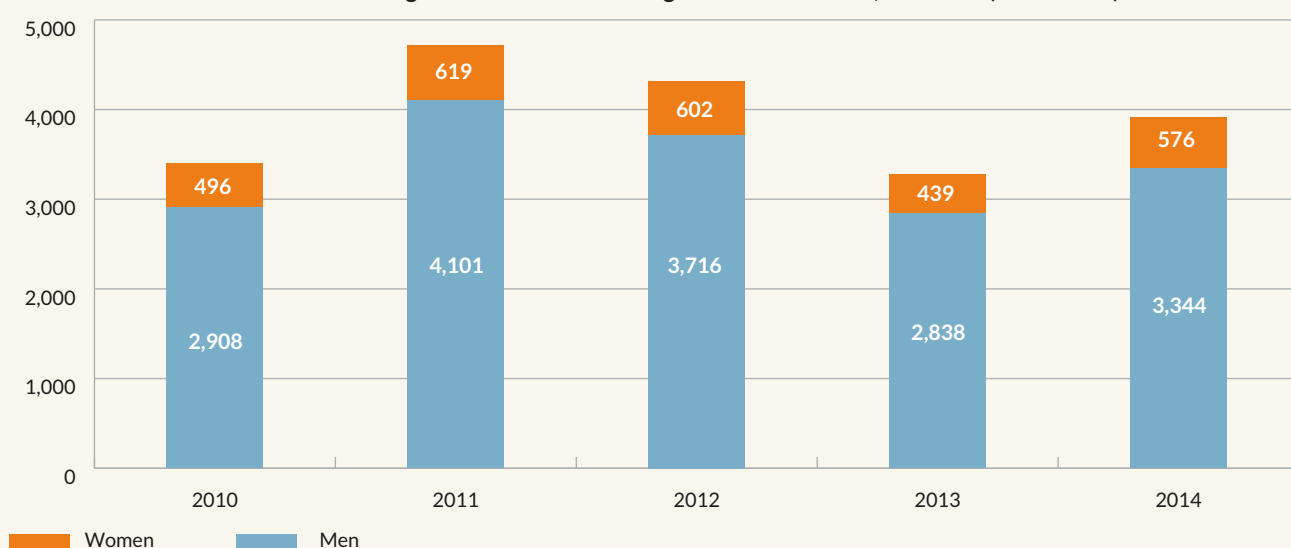
FIGURE 2 Indian migrant flows in Germany (1960–2014)



Source: Federal Statistical Office, 2016

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FIGURE 3 Number of Indian labor immigrants who entered through the Residence Act, Article 18 (2010–2014)



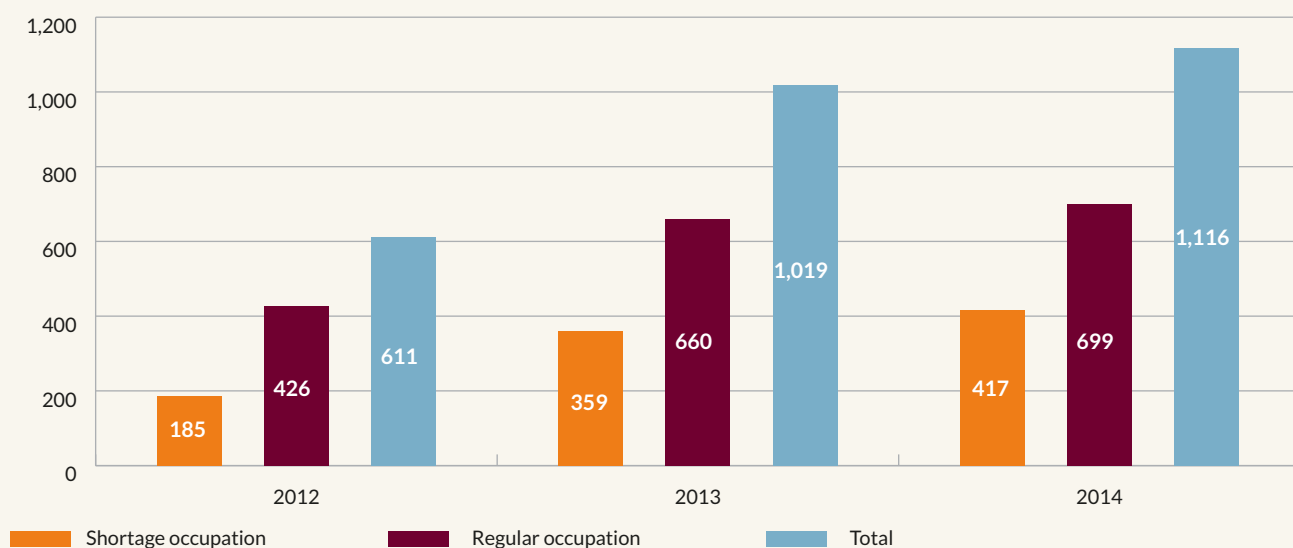
Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2015b

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The figure indicates that in line with the increase in the total Indian population, the migration balance, i.e. the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants, has also developed positively in recent decades. In concrete numbers this means that while in the 1990s the migration balance amounted to around 4,500 people, it increased in 2014 to more than 8,500. In particular, the data show that Indian migrant flows clearly increased after 2000. According to 2011 census data, this means that almost

69 per cent of all Indians immigrated to Germany between 2000 and 2011 (Federal Statistical Office, 2011). In line with the findings of Schneider and Parusel (2011), at least some of the Indian migrant flows are accounted for by either temporary or circular international migrants. This might provide a first insight into migration patterns, including the length of stays of current Indian migrants, as well as the effects of migration on development for the migrants themselves as well as Germany and India.

FIGURE 4 Number of Indian professionals who entered under the Residence Act, Article 19a (BlueCard) (2012–2014)



Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2013, 2014, 2015b

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As noted above, the study focuses on the migration of high-skilled employees that is described in Article 18 of the national Residence Act, and on the implementation of the EU BlueCard initiative as described in Article 19a of the Residence Act. The immigration trends seen in the following figures therefore primarily reflect these immigration channels.

As Figure 3 shows, the number of Indian labor migrants has generally risen since 2010, when 2010 is used as a reference year.<sup>2</sup> According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (2015b) the broad majority of these labour immigrants (96.5 per cent) had high-skilled occupations in the German labor market in 2014. Furthermore, the data show the underrepresentation of female immigrants, who make up less than 15 per cent of the total inflows in 2014.

As noted above, high-skilled migrants have also been able to enter to Germany through the BlueCard program since 2012. According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (2015b), in 2014 around 21 per cent of all BlueCard visas were issued to immigrants from India. The figure shows that the number of Indian immigrants who entered with a BlueCard permit has increased from 2012 to 2014 by more than 80 per cent. Furthermore, the share of immigrants working in the so-called shortage occupations

has slightly increased in the same time period from initially 30 per cent to 37 per cent.

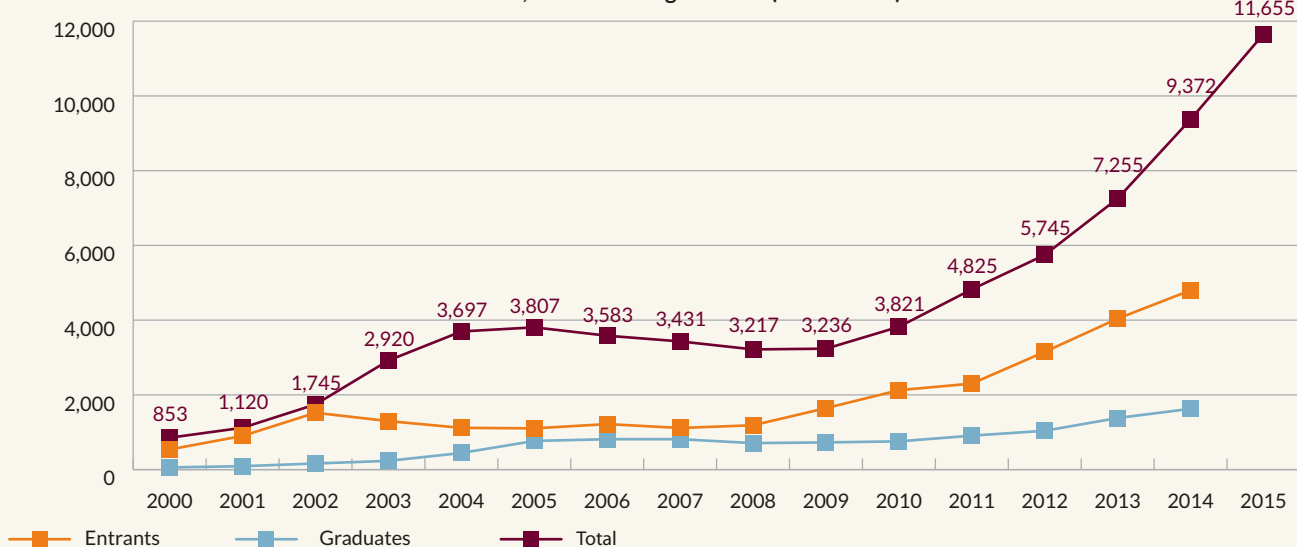
International Indian student immigration to Germany has also increased significantly in recent years. India was only 14th among the 20 most important countries of origin for international students in 2004 (Bruder et al., 2015). These numbers have since risen markedly, particularly after 2009, with India advancing to second place in 2015 (Heublein et al., 2016), an increase of more than 215 per cent over 11 years. This trend is also visible in Figure 5.

The figure shows that the total number has significantly increased from 853 international students in 2000 to 11,655 in 2015. This increase is also reflected in the number of university entrants, especially after 2011, as well as the number of graduates, which increased between 2000 and 2013 by 19 per cent. The most common subjects studied by Indian international students at the master's degree level in 2015 were informatics and engineering (Heublein et al., 2016). Interestingly, these subjects also correspond to labor sectors that currently include shortage occupations in Germany.

Finally, statistical information regarding the balance of incoming Indian students and professionals to Germany and their outmigration in subsequent years provides interesting insights in both categories into the development of the intention to stay. These trends are reflected in the following figure which was developed using data from the Central Register of Foreigners (*Ausländerzentralregister*).

<sup>2</sup> The European BlueCard was integrated into the German Residence Act in August 2012, which is partly responsible for the decreasing numbers between 2012 and 2014 for migrants entering the country under Article 18.

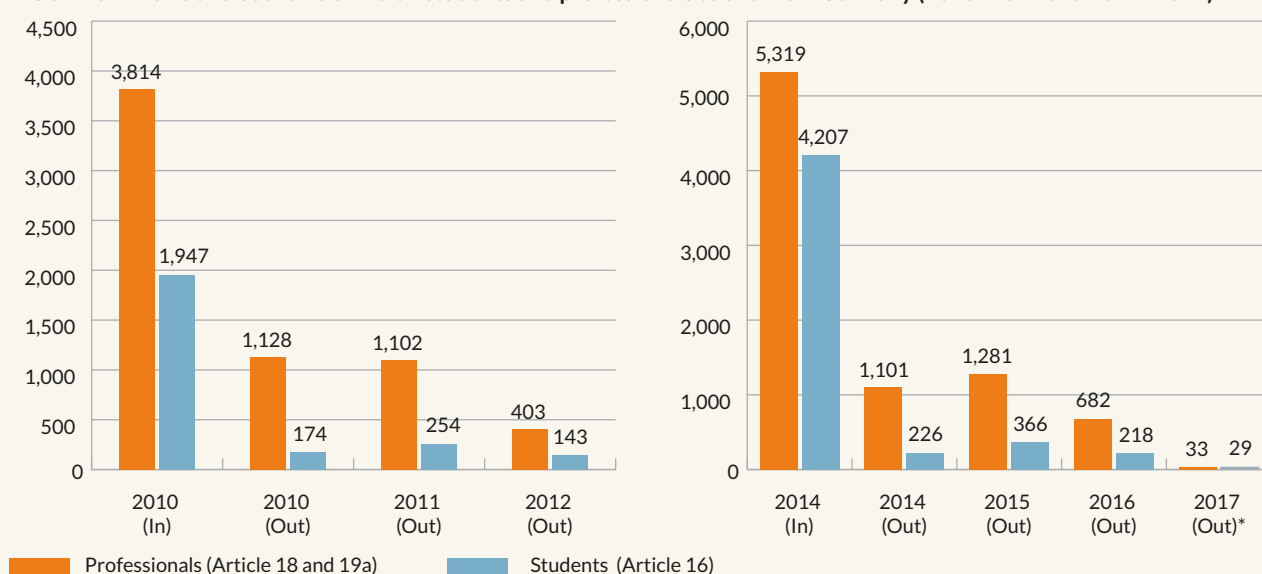
FIGURE 5 Number of international Indian students, entrants and graduates (2000–2014)



Source: Heublein et al., 2016

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FIGURE 6 Inflows and outflows of Indian students and professionals to and from Germany (2010–2012 and 2014–2017)



\* Data for 2017 are considered until February 28.

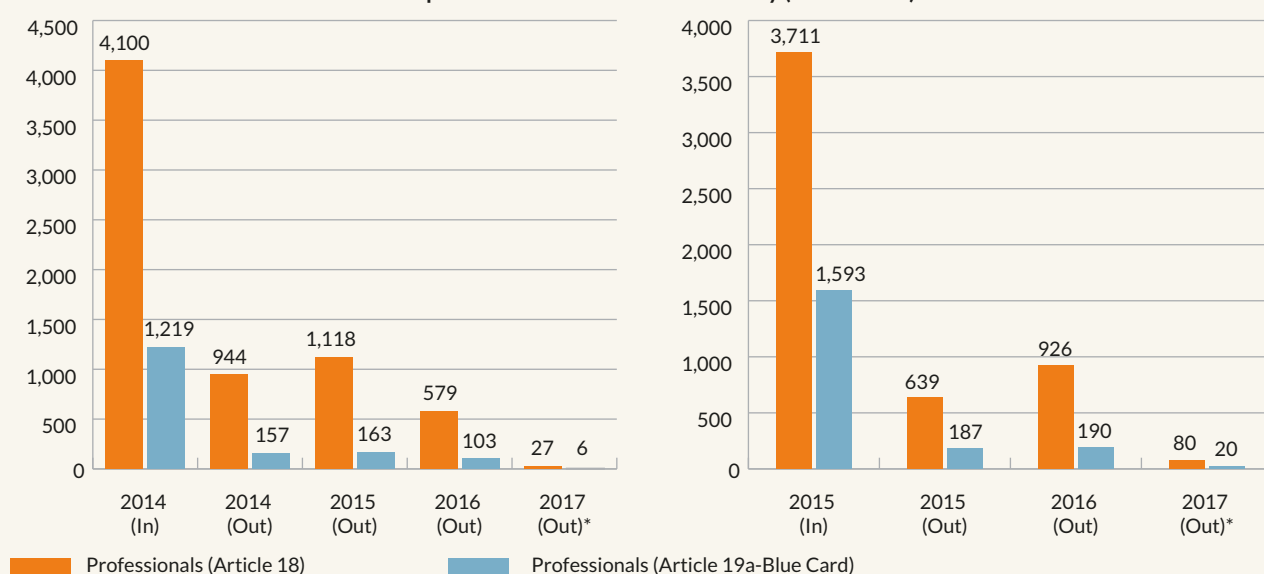
Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (AZR), 2016a; 2017

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According to these data, 29 per cent of the Indian students who arrived in Germany in 2010 left the country between 2010 and 2012. Student outflows decreased over time, meaning that of those Indian students who immigrated in 2014, only around 20 per cent left the country between 2014 and the beginnings of the year 2017. A similar trend is observable among Indian high-skilled migrants: While 69 per cent of the professionals who entered the country in 2010

left between 2010 and 2012, the share of Indian professionals who entered in 2014 and left until the beginnings of 2017 diminished to around 58 per cent. This indicates that in both cases (Indian students and professionals) stays of more than two years have increased among incoming Indian migrants. This shows that there is among Indian students and professionals a positive trend regarding their intention to engage in longer stays in Germany.

FIGURE 7 Inflows and outflows of Indian professionals to and from Germany (2014–2017)



\* Data for 2017 are considered until February 28.

Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (AZR), 2016a; 2017

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The next figure illustrates the differences regarding the intentions of stay according to the legal permit that Indian professionals possess.

Accordingly, it shows that while 58 per cent of those migrants who entered between 2013 and 2015 through the national legal framework (Article 18) left Germany during the next four years (2013–2016), the percentage of those who entered the country with a Blue Card amounts to only 33 per cent.

Accordingly, it is shown that 65 per cent of those Indian professionals who entered under the article 18 and 35 per cent of those who entered with the Blue Card in 2014 left the country until February 2017. Similarly, 44 per cent of those who arrived under the article 18 and 25 per cent of those who came through the Blue Card in 2015 left the country until February 2017. This information indicates two trends; while Indian professionals mainly entered in 2014 and 2015 to Germany through the national residence permit (article 18), those who arrived through the Blue Card scheme (article 19a) to the country have a higher propensity for longer stays.

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## 5. Comparative view of Indian migration to the UK and to US

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After addressing the general characteristics of past and current migration from India to Germany, as well as German immigration policies, this section provides similar insights for traditional receiving countries for Indian students and high-skilled migrants. Next to economic opportunities and legal requirements, migration decisions in general tend to depend on the financial and social costs that potential migrants need to invest. Access to existing networks of co-nationals and knowledge of the language and culture of the destination country therefore play an important role. Accordingly, the majority of migrants coming to the UK have for a long time consisted of nationals of former colonies, including India (Czaika & de Haas, 2013). Nevertheless, the UK is currently still the most important European destination for high-skilled migrants and international students from India. Similarly, Indian migration to the US dates back 200 years and India is still the second most important country of origin of Asian immigrants to the country. English is the official language in both countries, which facilitates adaptation processes in different societal realms, because there are no language barriers that might represent obstacles to integration into the labor market and into society. Both countries are therefore interesting cases of comparison for Germany, which became an important destination for Indian high-skilled migrants much more recently, and which is still much less important in terms of the number of Indian immigrants.

### 5.1. Indian high-skilled and student migration to the UK

After India's independence in 1947, the UK became the most important destination for Indian emigrants. Until today, India has remained one of the most important countries of origin of Asian migrants in the UK, as shown in figure 8.<sup>3</sup> Its total share of all immigrants in 2014 was 6.7 per cent

(Wadsworth, 2015). While this percentage does not seem to be very significant, it has to be considered with respect to the high and increasing diversity of origin countries of UK immigrants (Czaika & de Haas, 2015).

Figure 8 also shows the marked decrease in Indian immigration to the UK after 2010. In addition, a growing number of Indian nationals have left the UK, a trend that peaked in 2011 at more than 20,000 persons, compared to less than 5,000 in the year 2000. Therefore, the share of Indian migrants of the total stock of migrants living in the UK decreased from 13.5 per cent in 1985 to 9.2 per cent in 2014 (Wadsworth, 2015).

#### 5.1.1. Political and legal developments

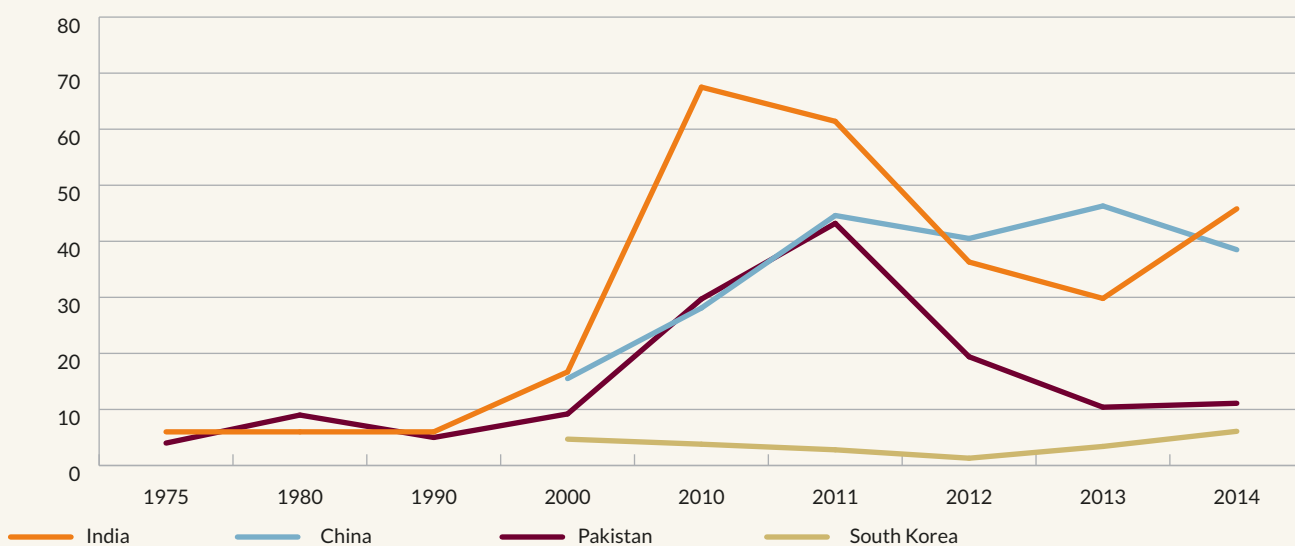
These developments need to be understood in light of recently changing immigration policies, particularly with respect to high-skilled migrants. Until 2007, high-skilled migrants could enter the UK either through the Work Permit System (WPS), which required a concrete job offer by a company, or through the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP), through which applicants with exceptional skills and experience could enter the UK to look for work or become self-employed. Of the work permits issued through the WPS for skilled and high-skilled workers in 2007, 41.2 per cent were granted to Indian nationals, followed by work permits issued to US citizens, which accounted for only 12.6 per cent in the same year. At 37.1 per cent, Indian nationals also had the highest share of approved applications through the HSMP in 2007 (Zuccotti, 2013).

This system was replaced by the UK Points Based System (PBS), introduced between 2008 and 2009. It was based on a five-tier framework, of which two were of relevance for high-skilled migrants and students: Tier 1 for highly-skilled migrants, entrepreneurs, investors and graduate students and Tier 4 for students. Tier 1 in particular offered routes to permanent settlement and allowed dependents to come to

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<sup>3</sup> Data for China and South Korea are unavailable before 2000.

FIGURE 8 Asian immigration to the UK, top four countries (1975–2014)



Source: Authors' compilation based on ONS, 2015a; ONS, 2015b

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the UK as well (Murray, 2011). This was partly changed after 2011, when access to the UK through Tier 1 was closed.<sup>4</sup>

### 5.1.2. Current situation of immigration from India to the UK

For a long time, the UK was considered an attractive destination country for high-skilled migrants, partly because of the high wages paid for educated migrants in comparison to other European destinations (Czaika & de Haas, 2015). However, recent developments related to the immigration and the settlement of high-skilled migrants from non-EU countries has negatively affected this image. One example of these developments is the debate about a new law in force since April 2016, which restricts the long-time settlement of high-skilled migrants from non-EU countries. According to this law, those who want to apply for settlement in the UK when their Tier 2 high-skilled worker visa expires after the period of five years for which it is granted are required to earn at least £35,000 per year (Ferguson, 2016). Given the importance of high-skilled professionals and international students from India, the legal restrictions were also directly related to the Indian context. Media articles appeared, for instance, based on a statement made by the Indian High Commissioner to Britain on the limiting of high-skilled professionals allowed to enter the UK and on restrictions to student visas (Ahmed, 2015; Martin, 2015).

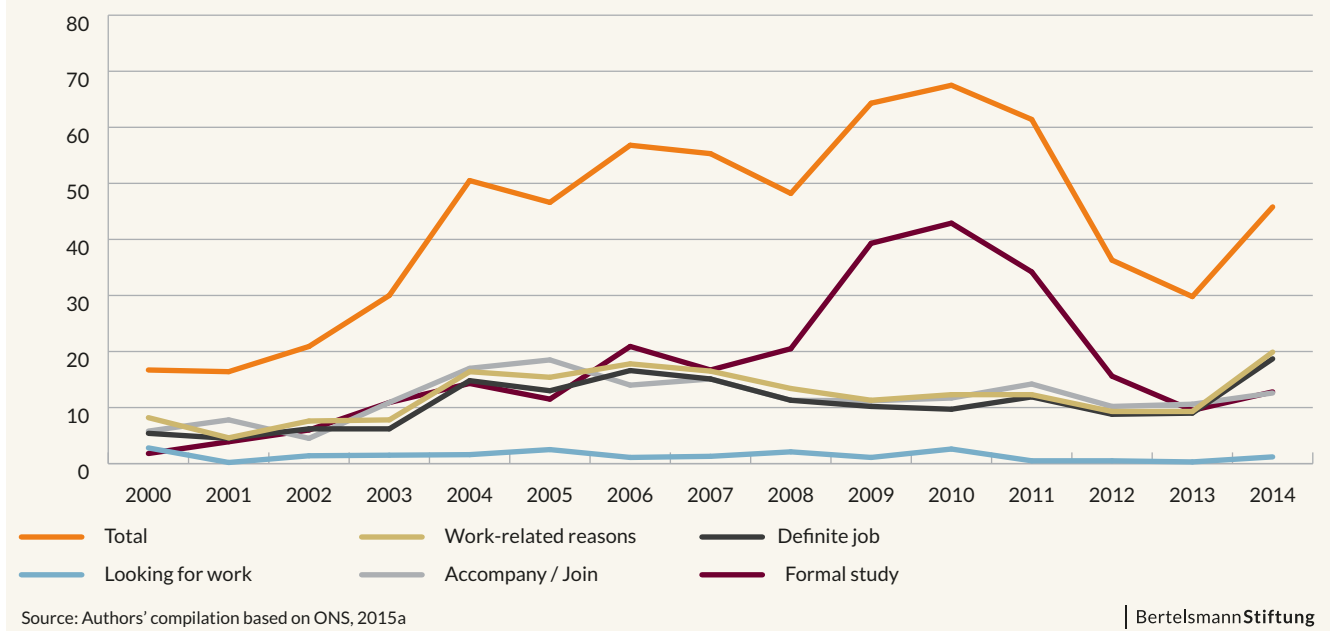
In contrast to labor migration, of which 60 per cent originates from EU countries, most student migration (71 per cent) originates in non-EU countries, including India. Formal studies were also the most important reason why non-EU migrants obtained a visa for the UK in 2015 (about 210,000), followed by visas granted for the purpose of work (almost 166,000), including high-skilled occupations (ONS, 2016).

Figure 9 depicts the development of Indian immigration to the UK between 2000 and 2014 by main reasons for migration. It shows that the total number of Indian nationals moving to the UK has almost quadrupled between 2000 and 2010, increasing from 16,700 to 67,500 persons. This development was mainly caused by the high number of Indian nationals moving to the UK for formal studies. In parallel to the decline in high-skilled workers, from 2011 on the number of Indian students also decreased. This is likely related to the significant increase in tuition fees in the UK, which were raised to £9,000 per year in 2010 from £3,225 per year previously.

This means that there are at least two different reasons for the decrease in migration from India after 2011. On the one hand, access to the country for high-skilled migrants has become more difficult and, on the other hand, higher tuition fees have restricted access to tertiary education for those students who do not receive a scholarship or are financed by their parents.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/tier-1-general/overview>

FIGURE 9 Migration of Indian nationals to the UK by main reason for migration (2000–2014, thousands)



## 5.2. Indian high-skilled and student migration to the US

As noted above, the history of immigration from India to the US goes back almost 200 years. As the following figure shows, Asian immigration to the US has significantly increased, especially over the last six decades.

The chart also shows that after China, India is the second most important source country of Asian immigrants living in the US. It must also be noted that in 1960 there were only 12,300 Indian-born migrants in the US, which corresponds to 0.5 per cent of the total immigrant population. After this period and particularly after 1990, the numbers increased significantly, amounting to a total share of 4.7 per cent in 2013. This quantitative trend was also linked to qualitative shifts. According to Singh and Rajan (2016), between 1960 and 1970, the composition of Indian immigrants in the US became more heterogeneous with regard to sending regions, educational levels and attachment to social classes. Especially after 1990, inflows to the US of international students, high-skilled immigrants and related family members started to increase, a development that was partly influenced by changing immigration policies.

### 5.2.1. Political and legal developments

US immigration policies have also changed in recent decades. The most important legal changes affecting

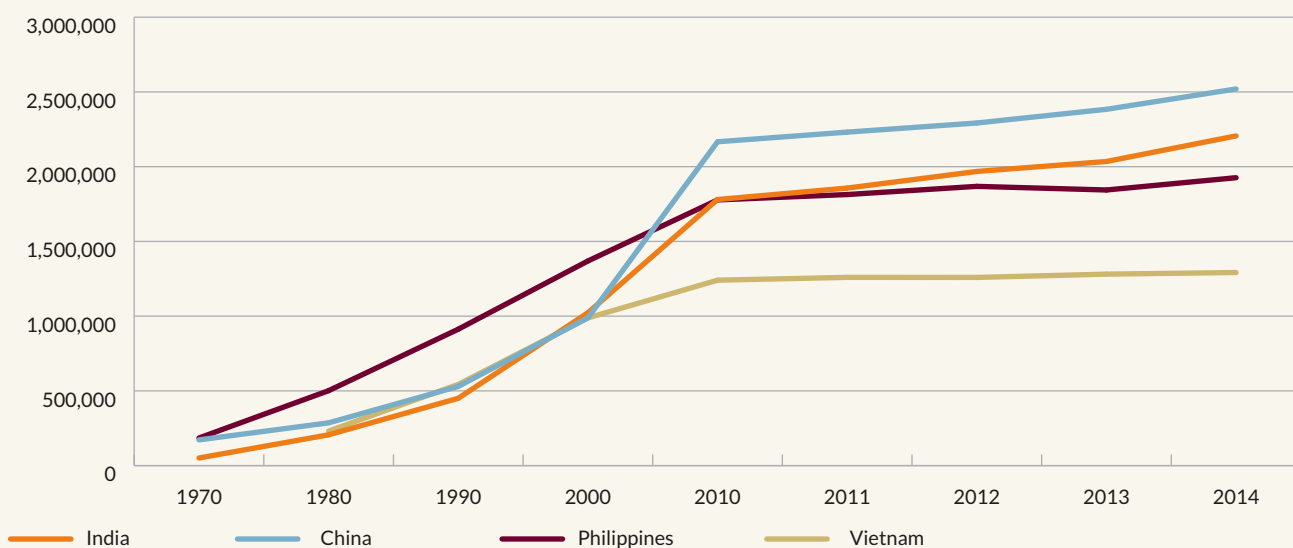
immigration to the US, including the inflow of Indian migrants, can be summarized as follows:

After a long period of restricted immigration policies and high security standards, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 removed national quotas and focused on employment-based channels for immigration, leading to the increasing inflow of Asian and especially Indian professionals, family members and students in the subsequent years (Khadria, 2009). The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990 modified and enlarged the previous legal framework. It raised the immigration ceiling to 700,000, corresponding to an increase of available visas of 40 per cent. A temporary resident program for high-skilled immigrants was introduced, in particular through the implementation of the H1-B visa (Cohn, 2015). It is also worth noting that since 1990 legislation governing temporary immigration has been frequently amended. This is the result of different political processes, including of the election of new administrations and Congressional majorities and the accompanying changes in political priorities and agendas, as well as the terrorist attacks of 2001 and the financial crisis of 2007/2008 (Khadria, 2009).

The American Competitiveness in the 21st Century Act of 2000 represented another legal shift in the country's temporary immigration program, one that aimed to further control and adjust inflows according to economic demand. The restrictions were designed to meet the demand for



FIGURE 10 Asian migration stocks in the US, top four countries (1970–2014)



Source: Authors' compilation based on Gibson &amp; Jung, 2006; United States Census Bureau, 2016

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high-skilled migrants in the areas of science, math, and engineering, and led to a gradual increase in the number of temporary visas issued (Hipsman & Meissner, 2013). The legal framework was, however, adjusted in subsequent years and linked to concrete needs for highly-qualified migrants within the US economy. This change in focus resulted in the Immigration Innovation Act of 2015.

### 5.2.2. Current situation of immigration from India to the US

According to the American Community Survey implemented by the US Census Bureau, the total number of foreign-born Indian immigrants was estimated to be around two million persons in 2013, the second largest diasporic community after immigrants from China. Regarding the social position of Indian immigrants, the survey shows that around 48 per cent are female and the vast majority (77 per cent) is between 25 and 44 years of age. Additionally, 70 per cent of the Indian population 16 years and older is employed. More than 76 per cent of the population 25 years and older has a bachelor's, graduate or professional degree. At 73 per cent, almost three-quarters of the population is considered to be involved in high-skilled occupations in areas such as management, business, science and the arts. It is estimated that more than one million Indians, or more than 52 per cent of the total Indian immigrant population, are not US citizens. Moreover, around 19 per cent immigrated to the country after 2010 (United States Census Bureau, 2016), which indicates the relevance of temporary stays among Indian immigrants to the US.

According to information provided by the Department of Homeland Security (2008; 2015), the total number of people from India who received non-immigrant admission<sup>5</sup> amounted to 409,557 in 2000 and increased continuously in the subsequent years to 1,551,246 million in 2014. With the exception of tourist visits and business travel, the most significant permit authorized in this category was the H1-B visa for temporary high-skilled workers and trainees involved in specialty occupations, granted to 194,278 persons (13 per cent) in 2014. In addition, L1 visas available for intra-company transferees from India were granted to 33,980 persons (2 per cent) in the same year (Department of Homeland Security, 2015).

Indian international students also represent a relevant migrant category in the US. According to the Institute of International Education (IIE) the immigration of international students from India increased in absolute numbers from almost 77,000 in the 2004/2005 academic year to around 133,000 in 2014/2015, corresponding to a rise of around 74 per cent over 10 years (IIE, 2015). About 64 per cent of all international students from India were enrolled in graduate studies, 12 per cent in undergraduate studies, 1 per cent in non-degree studies and 22 per cent in an optional practical training. Finally, the most important subjects these students are enrolled in are engineering, at

5 Non-immigrant admission may be authorized for "temporary visits for business or pleasure, academic or vocational study, temporary employment, or to act as a representative of a foreign government or international organization" (Foreman & Monger, 2014: 1).

38 per cent, math and computer science, at 31 per cent, and business and management, at 11 per cent (IIE, 2015).

This brief discussion on trends in the UK and US with regard to Indian migration shows some convergences and divergences when comparing both countries with Germany. Indian immigration can be seen as a traditional phenomenon in both the UK and the US; while in the UK it is linked to colonial relationships, the US started to systematically attract Indian migrants in 1965. Although Indian immigration to Germany also started in the 1960s, the numbers were small and immigration policies were not focused on attracting Asian and, particularly, Indian immigrants.

Especially in the 1990s in the US and in the early 2000s in UK, the number of Indian migrants started to increase significantly. In the case of the UK this was related to the growing importance of high-skilled worker programs, which facilitated the entry and settlement of professionals in the UK. In the case of US, this trend was related to the implementation of temporary visas within the framework of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990. With this change, immigration policies have become more tolerant towards temporary migrants, such as professionals and students. These legal channels allowed the entrance of several thousand Indians in both countries. In comparison to the US, temporary programs in Germany that facilitate the entrance of high-skilled migrants and students were the NFL in 2005 and BlueCard program in 2012. While in the case of the US these immigration policies shifted 10 years after the implementation of the Immigration and Nationality Act towards more selective legislation, the UK has started to significantly restrict immigration in recent years. As a consequence, the importance of the UK as a destination country for high-skilled migrants and international students has decreased, since changes to the legal framework and higher costs for studies have rendered it less attractive and accessible for many migrants from non-EU countries. However, the large Indian migrant community and the fact that no language barriers exist still make the country a desired destination and provide a good environment for more permanent stays. In comparison to these countries' legislation, with the exception of the German GreenCard program, the German legal framework has, since the implementation of the NFL, been designed as a selective policy for non-European migrants.

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## 6. Existing research into Indian high-skilled professionals and students in Germany: literature review

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So far there has been no comprehensive empirical study addressing the motivations of Indian high-skilled migrants and international students or their experiences and related intentions about the length of stay in Germany. Nevertheless, research into similar topics in the context of the GreenCard program in the 1990s can provide insight here, as can more recent studies into the experiences of high-skilled migrants and international students from different countries of origin. The most important results from these studies will be discussed in the following sections.

### 6.1. Research into German GreenCard holders

Research into the perceptions of German GreenCard holders from India dates back to the early 2000s when a different political and economic context existed in Germany compared to the current situation. For instance, the study by Oberkircher (2006), based on his master's thesis, analyzed the contributions by Indian GreenCard holders and conducted online and personal interviews with some of the participants in the online fora. He identified a discrepancy between the expectations Indians had about their stay, on the one hand, and life in Germany and the image that Germans have of India, on the other. According to his research, Indian GreenCard holders perceived themselves as members of a highly mobile modern middle class, while they thought that Germans see them as part of a traditional society which came to work in Germany for economic reasons only. In line with perceptions about themselves as "global Indians," they did not feel they were part of the Indian diaspora in Germany, but only connected to it. This observation is supported by Goel's argument that it is impossible to speak of one "Indian diaspora" in Germany, as many groups with different characteristics co-exist (Goel, 2007).

According to Oberkircher's study, there was a general perception of moving to Germany as a challenge regarding the different language and culture, which, however, could be overcome, but also as an opportunity to enjoy more quality of life. The major points of criticism relate to a lack of information and little engagement on the part of the German government and German employers. This was discussed in particular in light of the fact that the GreenCard was designed only for temporary stays and thus offered limited opportunity for staying in Germany for a longer period of time (Oberkircher, 2006).

Pethe (2006) conducted an email survey of GreenCard holders of different national backgrounds and complemented the information with qualitative interviews with representatives of companies located near Munich in southern Germany. She argued in her extensive doctoral thesis that foreign job applicants actively searched for employment in Germany and were often employed in SMEs. Most of the company representatives, however, did not see the need to engage actively in the recruitment of foreign workers, which the author saw as related to the disconnection from the international labor market as a consequence of the recruitment ban established in 1973. However, they considered foreign job applicants when filling positions for which no local employees were available. There was a preference for high-skilled workers from Eastern Europe and China, while most companies did not want to employ Indian high-skilled migrants. International mediators and international business links between companies played a minor role in the facilitation of the recruitment process.

From the perspective of the GreenCard holders, working in Germany was perceived as a good opportunity to be involved in the development of new technologies in the IT sector, and a chance to enhance their personal experience. This means that economic motives and career development perspectives did not play the most important role in the

decision-making process to move to Germany. Integrating into the work environment was generally considered easy in within formal work procedures, but difficult in informal communication, as foreign employees were sometimes excluded from informal discussions among German employees. Predominantly larger companies employed external integration services, which supported GreenCard holders mainly in the search for accommodation and during institutional procedures, which often represented a challenge, even for high-skilled migrants.

## 6.2. Recent research into international high-skilled migrants

Especially after 2005, the facilitation of the legal entry and residence of foreign high-skilled migrants based on labor market shortages, as described above, provided a new setting for the employment of high-skilled workers in Germany. These changes in national immigration policies are of potential importance given contrary developments in other countries where more restrictive policies governing the immigration of high-skilled professionals and international students have been implemented. As shown above, in the UK, for instance, migration policies have become more restrictive, even with respect to high-skilled migrants, while in the US immigration policies now focus on more selective measures.

In the German context, Heß (2009) conducted a quantitative survey among high-skilled professionals from 75 non-EU countries. She found that the motivations to emigrate were in most cases based on three interrelated aspects, namely professional opportunities, general future prospects and the level of income in the country of origin. The high mobility of these professionals can be seen in the fact that more than 30 per cent had worked in a country other than their country of origin before coming to Germany. She also found that the majority of respondents were satisfied with their own occupation and their salary. However, they felt there were few opportunities for their spouses to find adequate employment. This is reflected in the fact that only 25 per cent of the survey participants indicated that their spouses were employed full-time and 12 per cent were employed part-time. In contrast, the majority of the survey participants perceived the quality of the educational system and the chances their children would therefore later have in the labor market as positive. The results showed that high-skilled migrants from India plan to stay for a longer period of time in Germany than other nationals; more than 45 per cent even envision staying permanently. This

finding contrasts with previous empirical research, such as the study by Schneider and Parusel (2011), who found that Indian migrants intend to remain in Germany for a shorter period of time than migrants from other countries.

The professional and personal experiences of high-skilled migrants from India and other Asian countries were also investigated in the context of a collaborative research project in 11 countries in Europe and Asia. The results of more than 120 qualitative interviews with temporary migrants and experts showed that high-skilled professionals and international students in Germany are often indecisive about their future career and life plans. Many of the interviewees could as well imagine remaining in Germany, moving on to another destination or returning to their country of origin. This qualitative evidence also matches the previously noted statistical information on inflows and outflows of Indian professionals. The data show that more than the half of the Indian high-skilled migrants who entered Germany in 2014 decided to engage in either return or onward migration in the following two years, and around 40 per cent decided to stay for longer than two years (Central Register of Foreigners, 2016). These decisions depended on many factors, including future career opportunities and developments in their family life related to partnership formations and/or the wish to raise children. Other important factors in decisions related to the length of their stay in Germany are strong transnational links to origin countries and the wish to live closer to members of their extended family and friends. All in all, the study shows that temporary migration as defined by law involves many uncertainties for migrants and countries of origin and destination, such as highly variable life plans and development outcomes, that are often not observable in the case of permanent migration (Aksakal & Schmidt, 2015).

Intra-company transfers represent a particular case in international high-skilled labor migration, one that is, however, very common in the context of high-skilled Indians in Germany. In most cases, these individuals work for Indian or international companies and their assignment in Germany is limited in time (Schulze-Palstring, 2015). German companies in general tend not to be interested in employing foreign high-skilled professionals on a more permanent basis because they feel that recruitment procedures are too complicated and too expensive, that potential foreign employees do not possess the necessary level of German and their skills in general are not competitive with German applicants, and that the formal recognition of foreign qualifications will create problems (OECD, 2013b). Therefore, as Tollenaere (2014) argued, a

large number of company transferees from India come to Germany with the intention of staying only for a short period of time. Nevertheless, it is still important for many of them to bring their nuclear family and members of the extended family, which is often not possible under the existing legal conditions.

### 6.3. Recent research into international students

With respect to international students from various countries completing their master's degree or PhD, a comparative study in Germany, the Netherlands, France, the UK and Sweden by Sykes and Chaoimh (2012) found that the perceived high quality of education had been the most important reason for studying in Germany. This, however, was also true for the other countries under investigation. The affordable costs of education and the quality of life in Germany were the second and third most important reasons for the decision to move there, as indicated by participants in this study. Almost 80 per cent of the questioned master's students and 67 per cent of the PhD students planned to stay in Germany after graduation. This constituted the highest share in all national contexts examined at both degree levels, which might be linked to the fact that the survey was carried out towards the end of the participants' academic programs when the propensity to stay is, according to the authors of the study, likely to be higher than at the beginning of the educational stay. Yet the research also found that the most important motive for staying after graduation was the intention to gain some work experience in Germany in order to increase the chances of finding qualified employment in the student's home country or elsewhere. Therefore, most of the surveyed students saw their stays in Germany as being of a temporary nature, and as including the completion of their degree and the gaining of initial work experiences in the labor market.

Bruder et al. (2015) confirm these results for the particular case of Indian students, based on empirical research from the year 2014. They found that the majority aimed to conclude their studies in Germany and that a large number also intended to stay in Germany after graduation. Around 35 per cent of Indian students said that they intended to stay, and 37 per cent said it was highly probable they would stay after graduation (Bruder et al., 2015: 38). The previously mentioned research by Aksakal & Schmidt (2015) revealed similar plans on the part of international students to stay in Germany for an indefinite period of time. In comparison, a survey by the National Science Foundation in the US found

that around 84 per cent of doctoral candidates intended to stay in the country after graduation, also based on data for 2014 (IIE, 2015).

Interestingly, the previously described statistical data on the inflow and outflow of Indian students indicate that 80 per cent of all Indian students who arrived in Germany in 2014 stayed two years or longer. This might indicate that international students are also indecisive regarding the intention to stay, and that the length of stay depends on many interrelated factors.

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## 7. Research gaps and relevant concepts of the study

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As the above literature review showed, a number of studies exist that provide information about what motivates high-skilled migrants and international students from India to go to Germany and about their intentions regarding the length of stay. However, these studies are based on quantitative enquiries and might therefore only cover some of the migrants' decisions and experiences (Heß, 2009), or they provide policy-related literature reviews (Schulze-Palstring, 2015; Gottschlich, 2012), discuss Indian immigration in the context of the GreenCard initiative (and therefore in terms of a legal framework that has changed, especially after 2005), or focus on certain sectors (Oberkircher, 2006) or certain regions in Germany (Pethe, 2006). In addition, there is a growing amount of academic and policy interest in the phenomenon of Indian high-skilled professionals and international students in Germany. However, only few of the recent empirical studies address questions related to the actual motivations lying behind the choice of moving to Germany, the extent to which different expectations were met by professionals, students and employers, the consequences of these perceptions for the length of stay in Germany, or the development outcomes that these movements entail. Some insights nevertheless can be gained from research into Indian immigration in the context of the previously noted GreenCard initiative, as well as from more recent studies of high-skilled migration and student mobility from other sending countries to Germany.

In addition, most public discussions on high-skilled mobility, which includes the largest share of Indian migration (Gottschlich, 2012), often concentrate solely on economic motives and outcomes. This economic perspective is observable, for instance, in debates on temporary and circular migration. In public discussions, temporary migration is often perceived as a process that “involves a one-time only temporary stay and eventual return which closes the migration cycle” (European Migration Network, 2011: 21). In the context of labor migration, it is assumed that these temporary stays are used “to take up

employment and send money home” (UNESCO, 2015). It becomes evident from these considerations that migrants discussed in this category are often perceived from the perspective of the host country, meaning that their stays are often understood by definition as short-term stays, without considering migrants' intentions. Furthermore, in distinction to flight and asylum, temporary migration is often considered labor migration (Dustmann, 2000), and therefore temporary movements are considered to be driven by economic rationales. Circular migration is often discussed in this context as a variant of temporary labor migration that is regular and repeated between different locations (Hugo, 2013; Vertovec, 2007). The development potentials available to sending societies by circular and temporary migrants are often seen as being limited to financial remittances and the transfer of technical knowledge (Commission of the European Communities, 2005). Outcomes for receiving countries are often seen as overcoming sectoral bottlenecks and the higher probability that this type of international migration will not result in settlement that includes risks and costs for the host society (Abella, 2006; World Bank 2006).

Consequently, there seems to be a lack of recent studies that take a more holistic social-scientific viewpoint and focus on the different factors that influence migrants' intentions with respect to choosing Germany as a temporary or permanent destination country, as well as on related development outcomes.

The present study seeks to fill this research gap for the case of Indian migration by analyzing the relevant context from different perspectives. Therefore, the study examines different opinions relevant for profoundly understanding the investigated context, such as those held by Indian high-skilled migrants, international students, experts in the research field and certain types of employers. This particular analytical approach allows for a nuanced view of the interrelated perceptions and an initial outlook on the



multifaceted developmental outcomes. In addition to this methodological reflection, it also seems useful to clarify key concepts and, in particular, define a number of central social-scientific approaches that help to guide the empirical discussion. These concepts are introduced in the following and revisited again in the discussion of the empirical results of this study.

**a) Migrants' transnational social ties:** This concept refers to international migrants' cross-border ties and social practices with relevant non-migrants, (e.g. family members, friends left behind) located in origin or other destination countries. The "transnational perspective" (Faist, 2000) is a way of analyzing "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994: 6). The strength of this perspective is that it makes it possible to address how social lives and relationships among migrants and non-migrants are subject to alteration by border-crossing formations, which for the case of Indian immigration can mean that cross-border ties and practices might influence the choice of particular destination countries, decisions on the length of stays and outcomes for migrants.

**b) Spatial and social mobility:** Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals from one social position to another (Berger, 2000), which involves the social movement of people over the course of their life, when considering the intra-generational mobility of society members (Saunders, 2010). This movement can take place vertically or horizontally: While the former addresses people's potential change from higher to lower positions, known as downward mobility, or vice versa, known as upward mobility, the latter implies societal shifts without moving vertically from one social position to another (Geißler, 2006; Berger, 2000). According to Galbraith (1979), migration is oldest strategy used by human beings against hunger and poverty. In relation to social mobility, this means that spatial movements represent one way of improving socio-economic conditions. This means that due to the change of residence, Indian migrants might experience social mobility, which might not only depend on labor market conditions and formal qualifications and their recognition in countries of origin, but also on general attitudes towards immigrants in Germany.

**c) Social inequality:** People's spatial and social mobility represents an aspect of social inequality. According to

Bourdieu (1986), the ability to ascend from a lower to a higher social position is strongly related to the access to economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. In line with this consideration, social inequality can be defined as the uneven access to opportunities and rewards in society. Unequal access means that the distribution of material and immaterial "valuable assets," (e.g. income, wealth, opportunities in the labor market, education, living environment) is imbalanced due to people's location in certain social positions, as well as due to certain heterogeneities (e.g. race, religion, gender) that people possess (Solga, Berger & Powell, 2009). There is a high probability that not all Indian students and professionals possess the same social capital in Germany, which might lead to unequal conditions regarding the access to jobs and other valuable assets.

**d) Social integration:** Social integration can be defined as an interactive process as well as a "generations lasting process of inclusion and acceptance of migrants in the core institutions, relations and statuses of the receiving society. For the migrants integration refers to a process of learning a new culture, an acquisition of rights, access to positions and statuses, a building of personal relations to members of the receiving society and a formation of feelings of belonging and identification towards the immigration society. The receiving society has to learn new ways of interacting with the newcomers and adapt its institutions to their needs" (Heckmann, 2005: 17). The concept is highly contested, because the definition, form and outcome of integration often depend on the "self-conception of the host society and the normative or desired role of immigrants and their descendants in that society" (King & Lulle, 2016: 54). This citation not only indicates that social integration often reflects the perspective of receiving countries (Kivisto & Faist, 2010; Joppke, 2001), but also it shows that very different perceptions exist that are influenced by geography (i.e. receiving country in play) (King & Lulle, 2016) and the period of time (Alexander, 2006). In this fashion, very different theoretical approaches have emerged in order to conceptualize social integration.

Esser (2001; 2009) sought to develop an integral model for social integration in Germany and defines integration as the cohesion of parts in a whole system. The model consists of four analytical dimensions: a) acculturation, that is, the acquisition of knowledge, skills and cultural settings relevant in the country of destination; b) placement, meaning the occupation of a certain existing societal position in the social

system, which is related to migrants' economic, institutional and political capital allowing them to obtain a favorable placement; placement also includes migrants' positioning in the labor market, meaning their incorporation in certain sectors and companies; c) interaction, which refers to the orientation of immigrants and non-migrants based on knowledge and symbols, through which social relationships are developing; d) identification, which refers to immigrants' relationship to a social system, which can be manifested by shared values, public spirit or acceptance of rules and settings. Based on these dimensions, four different types of social integration can be identified: a) marginalization, which means that immigrants are neither integrated in the destination country nor in the country of origin; b) multiple inclusions, which refer to immigrants' concurrent incorporation into the society of the destination country, while also remaining involved in the cultural settings of the society of the country of origin and/or integrating into the ethnic community; c) segmentation, meaning only remaining engaged in the culture of the society of the country of origin and/or integrated in the ethnic community; d) assimilation, or embracing the total incorporation into the society of the destination country (Esser, 2009). The ways in which Indian migrants are integrated into German society and what the main challenges are during the integration process make up a central part of the empirical discussion.

- e) Brain drain, brain gain and brain circulation:** There are very different approaches that address the linkage of migration and development. An important realm of discussion is represented by the concepts brain drain, brain gain and brain circulation.

The concept of brain drain critically addresses the causes and consequences of the outflow of skilled workers from developing to more developed countries (Kwok & Leland, 1982), whereby root causes for brain drain are often associated with different push and pull factors, such as low incomes, the lack of opportunities for career development, etc.

The resulting consequences of brain drain are often discussed in relation to losses of human capital in developing countries, either associated with absent returns from previous educational investments (e.g. the infrastructure for education, the formation of teachers, etc.) (Langthaler, 2008; Docquier, 2006) or linked to reducing economic productivity and per capita

income, and, consequently, to decelerated economic development in migration source countries (Haque & Kim 1995; Miyagiwa, 1991; Lucas, 1988). In addition, brain drain is associated with the loss of important tax revenues (Bhagwati & Hamada, 1974; 1982), because skilled workers often represent the highest earning and most highly taxed segments in developing economies. Because of outmigration, these social segments cannot be taxed, neither can the tax revenues be redistributed.

In contrast, brain gain and brain circulation emphasize the positive long-term outcomes of migration for developing countries. In these concepts, it is claimed that through the building of diasporic communities of scientists or entrepreneurs and through their return migration, favorable outcomes in sending countries can be achieved. These outcomes are often associated with the transfer of financial revenues and the flow of knowledge and technologies (Hunger, 2003; Fromhold-Eisebith, 2002; Meyer, 2001; Iredale & Guo, 2000). Brain circulation was researched by Saxenian (2005), among others, who found that Indian high-skilled migrants who studied and worked after graduation in Silicon Valley were able to build start-ups in India after their return. These returnees were embedded in cross-border networks, in the frequent transfers of technologies and know-how between India and the US and in the political transformation of India. The concept of brain circulation is closely related to the concept of triple win, because it addresses development processes in different realms, including the personal advancement of migrants in sending and receiving countries. To what extent the described brain circulation is relevant for the Indian-German case will be evaluated in the subsequent sections.



## PART TWO: Empirical results – reasons to choose Germany and to stay, and development outcomes

# 8. Reasons to choose Germany and to stay

Based on our empirical findings, this chapter sheds light on the reasons influencing the decision made by Indian students and professionals to choose Germany as a destination country and on the factors that influence their duration of stay in Germany.

These findings were also used to provide insights into the development potentials among migrants in India and Germany. Potentials were contrasted with unequal regional conditions and instances of social inequality that can limit high-skilled migrants and international students at different stages of the migration process.

### 8.1. Personal motives

In addition to legal structures, which often facilitate the decision to move and the choice of Germany as a destination, a number of personal motives exist, often related to the perception of the benefits associated with a professional or educational stay abroad in general and in Germany in particular.

#### 8.1.1. The significance of social mobility

According to the Bertelsmann Stiftung and Migration Policy Institute (2009), opportunities in the labor market represent a crucial factor for high-skilled migrants in their decision to select a certain country of destination. To that end, the majority of the Indian migrants interviewed said that their migration to Germany was linked to the expectation that they would find adequate opportunities that could serve as catalysts for social mobility; in the case of professionals, this was often related to being paid more and experiencing conditions appropriate for career development.

This also applies to the intentions regarding the duration of stay. Although many interviewees said that they

perceive their stays abroad as highly favorable for both their career and economic development, there were other perceptions. For example, some felt they had become stuck in their occupational position or even failed professionally in Germany. Consider the following statement by one professional regarding his perception of not being able to advance in his career development:

I'm a very ambitious person, and my ambitions and professional growth, my motivation have been completely crushed and destroyed here [in Germany]. (Singh, b. 1977, male, high-skilled migrant)<sup>6</sup>

This was especially highlighted by the professionals who compared themselves with successful co-nationals in other companies who achieved occupational mobility quite easily. One important reason for this perceived professional failure in Germany was the experience that ideas and engagement were not adequately valued by colleagues and superiors. Therefore, the work environment was not perceived as being beneficial for personal and career development. As a consequence, some professionals considered engaging in return, onward or circular migration, or in a combination of these options. Consider the following quote from another professional:

India is difficult for us; my wife is from Russia. She finds it hard to live there. I will be happy to go to US for one, two years to experience entirely different culture, people, everything, and probably come back to Germany. (Sandep, b. 1982, male, high-skilled migrant)

In this case, the interviewee considered engaging in temporary onward migration in order to have more international work experience that was considered beneficial for his future career in Germany.

<sup>6</sup> All personal information has been anonymized.

### 8.1.2. Gaining independence as personal development

Interestingly, some of the Indian migrants interviewed argued that, in addition to aspects related to career and economic development, non-career and non-economic factors are also highly relevant for them, a topic less often considered in current approaches to decision-making processes and migrant intentions.

Our findings show that Indian students and professionals felt the gain of independence during their stays in Germany was a central aspect of their personal development. This was often seen, first, in relation to the gain of individual autonomy in their professional and everyday lives in what was an unknown environment, and, second, in relation to their position in society, in the case of women.

In the former case, international students, for example, often associated increased autonomy and personal advancement with the process of becoming more independent from their parents, including greater freedom in decision-making in their own life, greater self-responsibility and the acquisition of cosmopolitan attitudes. Striving for economic independence was perceived as an additional gain, as expressed by one of the students:

I feel it's time for me to be a little bit independent in terms of ... I've taken a school loan, or an educational loan, to come to Germany. And some part of the interest is being paid by my family currently, and I wish to support myself and relieve them of their duties or burdens. (Balu, b. 1989, male, international student)

Additionally, coping with life in Germany alone was another aspect related to increased personal autonomy and independence from parents. For some students, this included living in shared apartments, which was perceived as greatly stimulating open-minded and tolerant attitudes regarding people of different cultural backgrounds.

Nevertheless, the process of fending for oneself was often perceived as difficult in the beginning, a time when some of the students were overwhelmed by the challenges related to the different educational system and the new living environment. Furthermore, increased independence did not necessarily imply that the parental relationship became less important. For instance, one master's student said that she still very much appreciated the emotional support provided by her parents and that she remained in close contact with them. Yet, as the following statement

shows, she felt her parents also welcomed her increasing personal independence:

So they're really proud, and they do treat me as a big kid right now... And it was right decision because I'm not suffering as they thought I would, so they were like surprised and starting to think that, ok, maybe you can leave the kid on her own. (Rohini, b. 1994, female, international student)

Especially in the case of female professionals and international students, some respondents indicated that outmigration also meant entering or progressing in the emancipation process, i.e. achieving more gender equality by living a more independent life. Gender inequalities, reflected in the oppression of women and the uneven access to societal resources, were considered by some to be a serious issue in India. This is particularly interesting since, as previous research has indicated, many accompanying spouses of male high-skilled migrants in Germany were equally qualified and often gave up their careers to follow their husband abroad. While these female spouses generally felt that they took this decision voluntarily, some of them regretted the interruption of their careers (Aksakal & Schmidt, 2015).

### 8.1.3. The weight of language proficiencies

Language skills – meaning the ability to express oneself in the workplace, at university, at institutions and in everyday life – is an important factor related to experiences gained in Germany, especially in terms of social integration and possibilities for career development. The interviews show that the migrants came in contact with the German language in different ways. A number of interviewees said that they had learned German when they went to school in India or during a previous stay in Germany. Some said that they had accompanied a parent to Germany several times when they were children and that they now wanted to become fluent in German and learn more about German culture. Therefore, they decided to move to Germany to work and study.

In the context of the GreenCard program, Pethe (2006) found that many German companies accepted English as a working language and that German language deficiencies therefore did not represent a major issue during the job search or on the job. However, insufficient German language proficiency would represent a career development issue in the long term. In turn, our findings depict a different picture, which might be related to the fact that a

number of different sectors were examined in which Indian high-skilled migrants are engaged, in addition to the IT sector. As noted below, many companies are not sufficiently prepared to operate in English. Moreover, several high-skilled migrants stated that they indeed have an advanced knowledge of German, but many emphasized that it is not sufficiently developed to cope with situations in which very specific German skills in the workplace are required. For several Indian students, the language-skill issues and the need to engage intensively in language learning was seen as a time-consuming venture and a distraction from their studies, which were perceived as highly demanding.

The lack of German language skills was often not considered discouraging before arrival in Germany; during the stay, however, it was perceived as an important obstacle to social mobility and acculturation in the country. These language barriers led to different integration issues (discussed below) and, consequently, to considerations on the duration of stay among both the professionals and students interviewed.

In sum, social mobility is, for Indian migrants, an important aspect influencing the choice of Germany as a destination. At the same time, regarding length of stay, Indian migrants have different perceptions on how social mobility influences this decision; while some had quite positive experiences and expressed the desire to stay for the long term, others had quite negative experiences, which resulted in the decision to leave the country. Indian students in particular perceived the independence they gained from their parents as beneficial. Female migrants felt migrating had increased their level of individual autonomy as a woman, because it had allowed them to escape from unequally defined gender roles in India.

## 8.2. Influencing factors related to India

Different considerations related to India can impact the selection of Germany as a destination country and the length of time students and professionals stay there. With regard to students, some experts see the class background of the families of migrants in India as a significant factor, one that can be linked to social position and, especially, socio-economic power. Thus, the family's class background can determine if young people from India are able to pursue more expensive education at a university in the UK or the US, or in locations where education is less costly. In line with this, experts have argued that studying in the UK and the US is not affordable for everyone, whereas due to the absence of tuition fees, together with generally

favorable educational conditions, Germany represents a good alternative for Indian students from the middle class. Thus, the absence of tuition fees – which generally renders Germany an attractive destination for international students (Aksakal & Schmidt, 2015; Sykes & Chaoimh, 2012) – also makes it an affordable option for members of Indian middle-class families.

Intra-company transfers are one particular channel through which Indian professionals arrive in Germany. Some of the high-skilled professionals interviewed also came to Germany as transferees or contract workers who were recruited in India to complete a project in Germany. This means that, in the case of intra-company transferees, the choice of destination is linked to economic globalization processes (i.e. the investments in Germany made by Indian companies or multinational companies located in India).

### 8.2.1. The role of extended familial responsibilities in India

Responsibilities towards members of the extended family are also an important aspect, in keeping with the tradition of maintaining close ties with relatives in India. Family bonds are very strong in India, which means adults often live together in the same house not only with their nuclear family, but also with their parents and other relatives. Given this view of family life, a number of high-skilled migrants complained that German legislation does not allow their parents, not to mention other relatives, to stay for more than three months at a time in Germany. According to various interviewees, this results in several disadvantages, such as the need to return to India if parents fall sick and need care, a response that shows the relevance of these kinds of commitments.

Professionals with children often stressed the importance of the extended family for the development of their own children. One aspect mentioned, for example, was education and socialization by the grandparents, especially in order to convey Indian traditions, values and culture.

In the case of inter-company transferees, making migration decisions based on family considerations can be difficult, because the length of temporary labor contracts for positions in Germany is often not clearly defined at the beginning of the assignment. This finding relates to previous insights by Tollenaere (2014), who stressed the importance for intra-company transferees of being able to bring their nuclear family and avoid disruptions, for instance related to the schooling of their children.

Moreover, some of the international students and professionals who were interviewed also said that they either planned to return to India soon in order to get married, or that they had previously lived in Germany, got married in India and then returned with their spouse. The interviewed experts also mentioned that for many families in India, there is a social responsibility to participate in the ritual of getting married in a traditional way in India. Some parents expect their children to marry a partner they have chosen once the children have finished their studies or their professional assignment abroad, which can be understood as a form of circular mobility. In those cases, the (temporary) return to India is necessary to comply with social responsibilities towards the parents, who would be offended, and also lose face, if their children did not accede to these marriage arrangements. However, as our findings indicate, staying in Germany for further study or for career development has also been used by some interviewees as a way of postponing, potentially avoiding and even leaving unwanted marriages without completely offending the parents or other family members in India. All these aspects show that Indian migrants maintain strong transnational social ties and transact with family members and friends frequently.

This also demonstrates that cross-border social spaces are so dense that interviewed migrants in some cases consider social norms and values in India as highly relevant, which implies that they would envisage a return in order to fulfill their social responsibilities there.

In the context of social responsibility, it is also important to consider that the relationship between migrants and these non-migrants is structured by the reciprocity between the migrants and their significant others in India, something that also determines migrants' social lives. These aspects can affect Indian migrants' future plans, which might lead to decisions to return.

### 8.2.2. Loyalty to India

Loyalty to India, including the importance of national identity, is another factor that is closely linked to social responsibility in India. The degree of importance of national identity seems to be linked to the part of Germany in which the interviewees lived. While some Indian migrants, especially those residing in metropolitan areas, said that they felt at home in the city where they were currently located, many others considered India home, sometimes also referring to their native regions or cities of origin. Almost all of the migrants interviewed stated that they

identified with India in political and cultural terms, demonstrating their strong social ties to these aspects, even though several interviewees had lived abroad for a number of years. This finding suggests that there is a high probability that Indian migrants might decide to return to India instead of staying in Germany in the long run, even if they are highly successful in their careers in Germany.

In sum, the results show that, in the case of international students, the family's class background plays an important role in the decision to choose Germany. This is related to the combination of low costs for education and the good reputation enjoyed by several of the country's educational fields. In the case of professionals, broader globalization processes, in which intra-company transfers are embedded, help determine the choice of Germany as a destination. With respect to intentions to return to India after graduation or after gaining several years of work experience in Germany, the findings indicate that social responsibility, such as towards family and friends in India, can have a strong influence on the duration of stay. This also holds true for feelings of loyalty towards India. Both aspects show that decisions for shorter stays are not necessarily linked only to unfulfilled personal expectations or better opportunities elsewhere.

## 8.3. Influencing factors related to Germany

### 8.3.1. Reputation of Germany as destination

One important factor that influences migration decisions is the reputation of the destination country in different spheres, as shown by Heß (2009). As discussed previously, traditional receiving countries, such as the UK and the US, have a relatively positive reputation among Indian migrants. This was confirmed by many of Indian migrants interviewed, and the reasons given were the countries' having English as their official language, the existing Indian diasporic communities there, the positive image that companies located there have, especially among Indian high-skilled immigrants, including the perception of favorable conditions for social mobility.

However, for many Indian professionals and students, Germany was also seen as an attractive destination. The reasons for this perception are not only related to the migrants' class background, as previously discussed, but also to other aspects associated with Germany. For students, some German universities, such as technical universities, and subjects, such as informatics, natural

sciences, math and engineering, are generally perceived as having a good reputation. This is in line with previous findings on international students from other origin countries (Sykes & Chaoimh, 2012). In addition, young Asian professionals often feel that working in the IT sector or in engineering in a company in Germany is beneficial for their career development (Aksakal & Schmidt, 2015). The interviews with Indian professionals suggest that this is the case because the labor market is perceived as being less competitive than elsewhere – in the US, for instance – leading to a better work-life balance, something that was also confirmed by employers and experts. In addition, these favorable career conditions for high-skilled migrants in Germany were seen to offer a beneficial learning environment for students, for instance because of the technical equipment in labs and the content of the courses, factors which were also mentioned as playing a key role in the selection of a potential country of destination (Bertelsmann Stiftung & Migration Policy Institute, 2009). In this vein, many respondents argued that Germany represented a perfect place of study for certain university subjects, especially for learning sophisticated “technical problem-resolving strategies” (Rajan, 1985, male, international student).

In conjunction with this, an Indian student association president stated that the subject of study often correlated with the duration of stay in Germany after graduation. The interviewee noted that engineering students in particular would frequently receive more good job offers after university, for instance in the automobile industry, leading to longer or even permanent stays.

In line with the above-mentioned considerations by students, some professionals also argued that Germany enjoys the reputation of being up-to-date on the latest developments in the IT and technological sectors. Interestingly, among professionals this is often associated with particular places, identified as industrial locations. Pethe (2006) argued that due to the geographic structure at the time, there were fewer global cities, meaning emerging economic centers, in Germany (Sassen, 2005). In contrast, our findings, based on expert interviews, show that larger cities in Germany have developed into technology hubs in recent years. In this vein, some of the students interviewed considered these cities adequate places to start their careers, and professionals who moved to these cities often perceived them as places with high “escalator effects” (Fielding, 1992), meaning that they were seen as very appropriate for accelerating career development.

One aspect often not considered in existing research is the influence of the increasing violent attacks against migrants on decisions to choose Germany as a destination. In this regard, most of the interviewees agreed that Germany was still perceived as a safe country, in which they could move around freely. According to some of the employers and experts who were interviewed, prospective Indian migrants and their families were well aware of the growing anti-immigrant sentiment and the danger of physical violence in Germany. However, these fears were not yet strong enough to prevent people from moving to Germany for work or study. Some of the interviewed professionals and students said that they had heard about incidents before moving to Germany. However, they did not fear they would be personally affected, because violent attacks were often seen as linked to certain regions in eastern Germany, in which they did not plan to live.

### 8.3.2. Cultural integration

Cultural integration encompasses adaptation to the language, knowledge of the culture, routines in everyday life and a general acceptance of the norms, values and behaviors in the destination country (Heckmann, 2005). Different dimensions of integration were seen in distinct ways by the interviewed professionals and students, on the one hand, and by experts and company representatives, on the other. As for the migrants, both positive and negative experiences in Germany influenced their willingness and ability to integrate into society.

#### Positive incentives for integration

High living standards were generally seen as positive incentives. Especially professionals whose family was also living in Germany said that they perceived the social security system as very progressive, since it provided high levels of protection from illness, unemployment and acute downward social mobility, especially in later life stages.

Moreover, although taxes in Germany were said to be quite high, the tax regime itself was seen as fair, because many of the taxes paid are returned after a tax declaration is filed. Additionally, a range of professionals and international students stated that they were attracted to Germany's larger cities. Next to better career opportunities and higher living standards, interviewees said that the quality of life in these places was more favorable because of the possibilities of being exposed to cultural diversity and different fashions and lifestyles. These cosmopolitan experiences were viewed together with opportunities to travel freely and enjoy the



cultural diversity of different European countries during the migrants' stay in Germany. These positive experiences were often linked to the wish to stay longer in Germany and become part of German society.

### Negative incentives for integration

In contrast to these considerations, some of the Indian migrants interviewed perceived Germans as cold and reserved in interactions with foreigners. This was reflected, for instance, in personal experiences of discrimination and non-acceptance in everyday life in Germany. These experiences were based on different events and perceptions, often associated with the individual's appearance or ethnic origin. For instance, a range of international students said that they were frequently refused access to night clubs and bars because of their ethnic background, or so they assumed. Some professionals argued that they felt that especially after the arrival of several thousand refugees in recent years, biases against migrants were becoming increasingly generalized and were mainly based on skin color. These perceptions of exclusion from German society often resulted for interviewees in isolation and feelings of loneliness. Interestingly, this was not only expressed by migrants who were single – as were most of the students – but also by professionals who lived with their spouses and children in Germany. Most of the interviewees said that to compensate for these negative perceptions they were involved in relationships with co-nationals and that they maintained strong cross-border ties and frequently engaged in social practices between Germany and India and potentially other countries. These relationships represented social capital that provided support in response to the perceived exclusion from German society.

### The assumed unwillingness to integrate

The existence of strong social ties with co-nationals in Germany and in India and the engagement in homeland cultural practices was to some extent interpreted by experts and employers as evidence that Indian migrants were unwilling to integrate. Due to this voluntary isolation, they were seen to be less interested and engaged in interaction with German citizens or other migrants. While according to Esser (2001) this consideration indicates segmentation, from a transnational point of view the existence of cross-border social spaces and practices (Faist, 2000) might demonstrate that Indian migrants are multiply included. These controversial perspectives also reflect the still unresolved discussions on migrants' transnational ties and integration, and the

question of whether these cross-border links hamper the integration of migrants or if transnational engagement and social incorporation are simultaneously possible. Yet there is much to suggest that the situation is determined by a range of factors, such as citizenship, length of stay and ethnic community, as well as the immigration and integration policies in the destination country (Entzinger, 2012; Portes & DeWind, 2004; Guarnizo, Portes & Haller, 2003; Vertovec, 2001).

In line with the previous reflection on migrants' unwillingness to integrate, an expert argued that it is their responsibility to prepare for their stay in Germany, which includes learning the language. According to this expert, some migrants are not aware of the importance of having the necessary German skills prior to arrival, while others do not want to make the effort:

Immigrants need to make a strong effort to quickly integrate, to learn the language and to build up a social environment in order to feel at home and to connect to the receiving society... Indian students and high-skilled migrants in particular do not show a strong willingness to learn German. This means that they somehow learn it, but not intensively. (Mike, male, expert)

In line with this observation and as mentioned above, some of the migrants interviewed said that they spoke some German, which was, however, not sufficient for their goal of studying or working. While language proficiencies in professional contexts will be revisited below, the lack of these skills in everyday life correlate to the previously noted feelings of exclusion and the engagement with co-nationals and other migrants.

### Children's school integration

Finally, another aspect that was considered important in the integration process in Germany was the education of children. In this regard, the institutional framework was considered differently by many of the interviewed professionals. Some said that opening hours of kindergartens were not compatible with their working hours; that the starting age for primary education was too late; that the international orientation of the German school system was insufficiently developed; and that international schools were scarce and, where they were available, tuition fees were excessive. The findings not only indicate that migrants felt the educational system was sometimes unfavorable for their careers in Germany, but also disadvantageous for their children's educational

integration. Some professionals therefore stated that, because of the issues relating to their children's education, they would later reconsider returning to India or moving to a country where Indian schools exist. It became clear that integration into the educational system of the children of Indian high-skilled migrants was a major factor influencing the length of stay, especially for the professionals interviewed in Germany.

### Bureaucratic procedures

German bureaucracy, meaning legal procedures in their various forms, represented another important aspect that was frequently perceived as a significant problem. In particular, a wide range of interviewees said that official documents and other information were not provided in English, and that the personnel working at formal institutions did not have sufficient proficiency in English. In the following statement, a professional reflects on the lack of English proficiency at German institutions and the unwillingness to speak English on the part of the people working there:

So if I have to settle for a longer-term, I would like to go to a country where at least English is spoken. So in Germany that is a big problem, [because] if I go to any state office, they don't speak English at all, nothing, and they don't even make an effort to help you. So, yeah, I tell you I try to listen to them and use an online translation app ... and translate the text to talk to them, or you get your translator on your own. But they would not make any effort. I believe if anybody is interacting with [the] public [they] should at least [speak] one additional language, and probably English because that's the most common. (Khan, b. 1979, male, high-skilled migrant)

In line with the quotation, several professionals and students said that they not only experienced problems at the local immigration office, but also at many other state institutions. This treatment was perceived by some interviewees as highly unjust and discriminatory, adding to the previously noted feelings of social exclusion. Employers, in contrast, had diverging perceptions of bureaucratic challenges. Some argued that bureaucratic challenges weren't as difficult as people often maintained, particularly in comparison to other countries (e.g. Switzerland) and therefore no special support by companies would be needed. Others stated that company support was crucial, because Indian migrants would face various administrative procedures at first which are different from the procedures in their home country. In a third viewpoint, some said that

especially those migrants who did not have any previous experiences in Germany should be supported.

Some of the migrants said that the provision of formal support to a large extent facilitated dealing with institutional bureaucracy. Professionals in particular received this kind of support from their employers, while international students were in some cases supported by student associations. In addition, social capital from social networks was often used as a source of informal support by some migrants. Our findings show that others who did not receive this type of formal or informal support perceived the bureaucratic sphere as highly complex and opaque and the personnel as less supportive and, at times, inconsistent. All these aspects related to the cultural integration of migrants can have an impact, either positive or negative, on the intentions regarding the length of stay.

### 8.3.3. Integration in the labor market and in companies

#### Recognition of qualifications

Some of the experts interviewed indicated that another important bureaucratic hurdle is the recognition of migrants' qualifications, which is also sometimes seen as a "crucial factor" in selecting a destination country (Bertelsmann Stiftung & Migration Policy Institute, 2009).

Professionals and students from India who migrated from other European countries or other western countries (e.g. the US, Canada and Australia) had almost no issues with the recognition of their qualifications. In turn, interviewees who obtained their qualifications in India or other non-EU countries said that this procedure was similar to the visa application process, i.e. highly complicated, especially in those cases where a lack of support existed. As some experts noted, this topic shows that, in terms of complexity and duration, procedures for recognizing the qualifications of Indian migrants coming to Germany depended on the place where the qualifications were obtained.

#### Working conditions in companies

Many of the Indians interviewed said that the working conditions in companies and the work culture in Germany in general were factors that positively influenced their career development and economic situation. A range of professionals stated that, in comparison to high-skilled jobs in their country of origin or in previous countries of destination, work tasks and work agendas in Germany were well-defined, salaries were appropriate, teamwork was

promoted and worker rights in general were adequately advocated by work councils.

Employers stressed the Indian professionals' strong work ethic and high level of performance, as the following quote indicates:

Many professionals in Germany are facing veritable competition by Indian high-skilled migrants, because they studied more quickly and they were much more willing to perform than the average employee in Germany... [Regarding] the flexibility, in Germany there are colleagues sitting around for two, three, four months without a project, let's say in Stuttgart. [When] I say we have a project in Hamburg, they say it's too far away. Then the work council meets and he sits another six months in Stuttgart doing nothing. That would never happen with Indian colleagues. (Frank, male, employer)

This statement also reflects the opinion of other employers, showing that many German companies hire Indian migrants to fill the gaps in sectors experiencing labor shortages. One of the main reasons is that Indian employees are appreciated for being young, easy-going, flexible and hardworking. This confirms the results from previous research by Aksakal and Schmidt (2015), who showed that most of the Asian temporary high-skilled migrants, including Indians, included in their study were not interested in participating in labor union activities.

Some of the experts criticized the fact that Indian high-skilled migrants earned much less than their German colleagues who did the same work, which was not mentioned by the professionals themselves.

In contrast to those who were satisfied or who accepted labor conditions and salaries, some interviewees stated that they became stuck in their occupational position. This was related to inflexible company structures that either did not allow any upward mobility for migrants or did not provide short-term upward opportunities. This situation shows the interrelation between personal circumstances and structural conditions in German companies. Furthermore, in some of these cases interviewees assumed that employers did not trust them during the hiring process and at the beginning of the contract, something that changed only after several years of employment. Consider the following statement by a German employer that illustrates this lack of trust:

I don't believe the written CVs of Indian job seekers, because based on my experience most of them are falsified or even copied. Therefore, I examine their skills at length during the personal interviews in order to find out about their real skills and competences. (Ludger, b. 1958, male, German employer)

In several cases these aspects led to feelings of injustice and poor integration into the company. In other words, our findings illustrate that there is a dichotomous picture regarding the incorporation of Indian labor migrants in German companies: While some interviewees said that they are satisfied with their labor conditions and expressed satisfaction with their professional integration, others felt that mistrust by employers symbolizes their not being part of the team. As a consequence, some interviewees who had negative experiences expressed that their intentions about their length of stay might change.

In the context of intra-company transfers, both employers and high-skilled professionals said that there was some uncertainty with respect to the flexibility of changing the employer during the stay in Germany. On the one hand, employers argued that since the introduction of the EU BlueCard in 2012, professionals are allowed to change jobs after two years in Germany and to continue working with another employer, which was not possible before (Tollenaere, 2014). From the employers' perspective, it was argued that this change sometimes led to difficulties in completing assignments when intra-company transferees were recruited by competitors.

On the other hand, as briefly mentioned above, some of the intra-company transferees and contract workers said that contracts were sometimes negotiated using a piecemeal approach. This means that, depending on the development of the project, contracts were first offered for a certain number of months and then extended until the conclusion of the assignment in Germany. This procedure had serious consequences for the professionals working under these conditions, particularly for their family life, because some of the spouses worked and their children were enrolled in schools in India. With the prospect of one of the partners – in many cases the husband – being away from home for only a limited amount of time, it did not make sense for the spouse to resign from a job or for the children to interrupt a school year to accompany him. As a consequence of several prolongations of the stay in Germany, in some cases families remained separated for a much longer period than previously expected, which was highly problematic for the majority of the Indian transferees. This shows that working



conditions depended to a large extent on the form of the work contract in Germany, which was in turn also linked to the choice of destination and especially to the length of stay.

### Recognition of skills and competences in companies

The recognition of migrants' skills and competences in the workplace is related to the previously discussed labor conditions. While the formal recognition of qualifications (discussed above under bureaucratic procedures) is important with respect to the integration of Indian high-skilled professionals into the German labor market (Gottschlich, 2012), the informal recognition of skills by employers was also considered by many Indian migrants as a further issue of relevance. The informal recognition might be important, because it is associated with the feeling of being fully integrated in the company.

Most of the interviewed employers acknowledged the high level of education that their employees had received at the MA or PhD level in India and their corresponding technical skills. In addition, there was a general willingness to bridge potential differences between the requirements of the Indian and the German labor markets by offering internal training courses at companies. For instance, an IT company representative taught new employees from India the specifics of the German IT market and the company. The employers interviewed therefore seemed to have a positive picture of the professional knowledge of the Indian high-skilled professionals they employed. However, there seem to be different views on the appreciation of informal skills of Indian employees in Germany. As the following statement shows, Indian high-skilled workers often felt that their ideas and suggestions were not valued:

Here in Germany, hierarchy is a big problem ... In Germany it's like this and in documents it's written like this. They will not do extra steps. But in India they're always open for those things. (Kumar, b. 1979, male, high-skilled migrant)

Interestingly, some representatives of companies in which Indian high-skilled workers are employed expressed an opposite view. They thought that Indian professionals were unable to contribute innovative ideas due to cultural differences, as shown in the following statement:

India is still a much more hierarchically structured working environment. If the boss says something, people start to run. Here [in Germany] this is different. People ask, people think, people criticize. I have never experienced this with my Indian colleagues. (Stefanie, female, company representative)<sup>7</sup>

This indicates that there are different understandings of attitudes in the workplace, which diverge according to cultural background and can lead to a mismatch between the expectations of Indian professionals and employers. As Upadhy (2006) showed for Indian IT experts in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, these diverging attitudes and behaviors are often based on stereotypes and not necessarily on people's own experiences. This might also be the case for how different work cultures are understood by German employers and Indian employees.

### Access to internship positions

For a broad majority of experts and employers, internships represent an opportunity, through which future workers and potential employers can get in touch. In other words, internships are crucial for helping international students successfully integrate into the labor market after they graduate. Some of the interviewees said retrospectively that internships helped them to understand the work culture and conditions, improve their technical language skills in German and contrast theoretical insights from the university and previous work experiences with practices in Germany. However, especially those who could not count on social networks, social capital and previous work experiences said it was very challenging to find an internship position. Yet it was also recognized that internships were a facilitating element in the study-to-work transition, because they often opened the door for integration into the labor market after graduation. Especially those students who did not have previous work experience, who did not do an internship or who completed one they did not like were frustrated with the high barriers to labor market access. One important barrier is the work experience expected as a prerequisite for employment. Consider the following statement by a student, enrolled in a PhD program in neuroscience:

<sup>7</sup> In contrast to the migrants, employers and experts were not asked about their year of birth.

On the other hand I also realized that companies mostly need a lot of experience before they hire scientists, and if they need experience and if nobody gets a job without experience, then how will they gain experience? This is like a missing point I did not understand. How I will gain experience when no one is offering me a job right after PhD and everyone expects me to be experienced? I did not get this point about company. (Ashani, 1987, female, international student)

These aspects regarding access to appropriate internship positions were in many cases interpreted as a sign of exclusion and non-acceptance, as were the high expectations of companies in Germany. Consequently, some interviewees considered changing their initial plans and searching for opportunities elsewhere after graduation.

To sum up, this section showed that a range of factors influences the decision to choose Germany as a destination and the length of stay. Germany's positive reputation among international students with regard to low tuition fees and the quality of some university subjects and, in the case of professionals, the attractiveness of certain labor sectors for career development represent the most important reasons for choosing Germany. Both students and high-skilled migrants especially view large German cities positively in terms of their personal career opportunities and the cities' cosmopolitan atmosphere. In addition, despite some incidents of violence against foreigners, Germany is still perceived as a safe country in contrast to other destinations. With regard to cultural integration, various positive and negative aspects affect the wish to stay longer in Germany and become part of German society. Children's education and entry into schools is also an important aspect, which was considered by many migrants with regard to their future plans. Bureaucratic procedures were perceived differently by interviewees; most of the migrants and some of the employers perceived them as complicated and sometimes discriminatory, while others said that they were relatively simple, particularly in comparison to the situation in other countries. With regard to integration into the labor market and in companies, the recognition of formal qualifications as part of bureaucratic procedures was considered difficult, particularly for those professionals who graduated from

universities in non-European countries. Labor market and social integration was especially difficult where no social support was available from networks, such as friends, organizations, institutions and companies. Working conditions were also perceived differently; while some Indian professionals expressed satisfaction, others felt that inflexible company structures hampered their careers. Employers were generally highly satisfied with the work ethic and performance of Indian professionals. In contrast, some experts argued that salaries and general work conditions were lower than for local employees. The recognition of skills and competences in companies was also discussed in different ways; while employers argued that they appreciated the Indian professionals' skills, some of the professionals complained that their expertise was not appropriately appreciated. Finally, internship positions were considered by experts and employers as highly relevant for labor market integration. However, many international students complained that the access to internships is difficult, leading to issues in the study-to-work transition. All these factors influence not only of the degree to which international students and high-skilled migrants from India integrate in Germany, but also their length of stay there.

## 9. Indian migration and development outcomes

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The experiences and perceptions of Indian international students and high-skilled migrants discussed above not only reveal specific factors that shape intentions to choose Germany as a destination and the length of stay, they also provide some insights into development outcomes. A discussion of these links is provided in the remainder of the text. In keeping with the idea of a triple win, the following section is divided into outcomes for migrants, for India as the country of origin and for Germany as the destination country.

### 9.1. Discussion on the development outcomes for migrants

#### 9.1.1. Social mobility beyond income levels and occupational positions

The results show that the perceived outcomes on the individual level are diverse and related to non-career and non-economic aspects. This means that next to career development and economic improvement, social mobility is in many cases also associated with other aspects linked to an increase in quality of life.

#### 9.1.2. Unequal access to social capital and its consequence for migrants' social integration

The empirical results also show that social mobility is strongly linked to social inequality, because they also reveal that Indian migrants' social movement is often hampered by diverse factors. One of these factors is the access to social capital, a concept upon which migration theory has drawn (Faist, 2000; Massey et al., 1993). In migration studies, it is broadly recognized that access to social capital is highly relevant since it can reduce the costs and maximize the benefits of migration. This perspective has often been used to explain how migrant networks facilitate outmigration and how they therefore might contribute to an increase

of migration flows in particular migration corridors. However, less attention has been paid to the effects of social capital after migration, in general, and how it is used to master bureaucratic processes and social integration processes, in particular. This was particularly relevant in cases where Indian migrants said that their language skills were not sufficiently developed. This perceived language insufficiency was linked by some of the interviewees to issues in very different realms of their professional and everyday lives, and include issues related to dealing with formal institutions.

However, it also became evident that in cases where professionals and students received support from employers, student associations or personal social networks, bureaucratic processes were generally perceived as being much easier than in cases where no support existed. This is even more important because, in view of migrants' language gaps, formal institutions in Germany are often not prepared to provide information or services in other languages such as English. According to some employees, this can result in significant delays which sometimes even threaten the timely start of the academic program for students or the work contract for professionals. As with the previous topic, social integration into the workplace, university and everyday life was generally considered easy in cases where support was provided. In contrast, in cases where no support was available, interviewees regretted not being engaged in social relationships and free-time activities with non-Indian migrants. It can thus be argued that social inequality exists between those Indian migrants who have access to social capital and those who do not. Migrants belonging to the former group said that they were able to engage without disruption in the development of their university studies, career advancement and social life during their stay. Interviewees from the latter group often perceived bureaucratic procedures and integration as being challenging. In several cases, such as among students

who struggled to find an adequate internship, the result was felt to be social exclusion and non-acceptance. Often enough, this situation was considered a vicious circle from which many could not escape. In several cases these considerations were perceived as adversely affecting their studies and career trajectories.

### 9.1.3. Social capital in relation to the duration of stay

As the empirical data show, the availability of social capital in Germany is crucially linked to migrants' perception of their social mobility because it facilitates their stay in Germany in many ways. For instance, some students and professionals perceived adverse conditions in combination with the lack of social capital as discouraging a long-term stay in Germany because they were seen as a distraction hindering them from engaging completely in their studies or career development. Especially those interviewees who had previous experience in other destination countries identified this situation in Germany as encouraging them to move on in order to obtain better opportunities for personal development elsewhere. Consequently, transnational ties to previous or other potential destination countries represented social capital that could be used to find better opportunities in other countries. It is an open question in which ways Indian migrants make use of social capital, especially in previous destination countries, and how this support can compensate for the lack of positive career outcomes in Germany. Finally, the negative consequences of social capital among Indian migrants are an area that remains largely unexplored.

Closely related to these factors on the individual level, influencing factors related to India also exist which affect migration decisions and decisions about the length of stay. These will be discussed in the following section.

## 9.2. Discussion on the development outcomes for India

### 9.2.1. The role of transnational practices between Germany and India

As noted previously, transnational social ties and practices are an important consideration in the interplay of Indian migration and development outputs. Many Indian migrants in Germany maintain strong social ties to people in their country of origin. These are not only used to counteract feelings of loneliness, but also in other kinds of transnational activities. In contrast to the public discussion

on migration and development, in which economic aspects (i.e. financial remittances) are often largely stressed (World Bank, 2015), in the case of many of the interviewees for this study, financial transfers were only sent very sporadically, for example in the form of gifts or loans. As noted by some Indian experts, this indicates that the majority of Indian professionals and students in Germany come from middle class families who might not be able to pay for expensive universities in the UK or the US, but who also do not need frequent remittances from family members living abroad.

Transnational social ties to professional contacts are especially relevant among the Indian migrants interviewed. Many professionals and students said that they are in frequent contact with ex-colleagues, ex-employers, previous professors and friends working in the same sector in other locations. This also indicates that specific knowledge circulates in different directions. Findings show that these transfers include ideas on start-ups in sectors that are seen as offering new business opportunities, and the exchange of technical insights, for instance for resolving particular problems in work processes. There is also evidence that international students provided former fellow students with information about the conditions at particular universities in Germany. This corresponds to the statement made by several students who said that one of the most significant reasons for selecting Germany as a destination was existing social networks. Interestingly enough, the interviews showed that social transfers were carried out in very different directions, which often connected Germany, India and previous destination countries. As noted above, earlier studies have found that brain circulation has the potential to result in transnational labor opportunities and businesses, through which not only migrants can advance in their careers but countries of origin can also benefit (Aksakal & Schmidt, 2015; Saxenian, 2005)

### 9.2.2. Uneven levels of transnational engagements and disparities in regional outcomes

Similar to the support system discussed above, transnational professional exchange is also a selective process in which uneven access to societal assets might play a role. This is the case because not all Indian professionals and students have access to sufficient professional networks and can engage in this kind of transfer. In this vein, the findings tend to confirm that especially those individual with previous migration experience and those who have worked elsewhere at international companies have privileged access to transnational professional networks. Consequently, these migrants are often able

to engage in transnational careers and businesses or in occupational trajectories that are fostered by transnational activities. As discussed by Saxenian (2005) for the US–Indian case, not only can brain circulation promote economic development through investments resulting from social remittances, it also shapes the political arena in India. Some of the professionals interviewed for this study said that they might return to India and establish a start-up company in one of the bigger cities. Although there is as yet no clear evidence if and in which ways social remittances from Germany are converted into investments and entrepreneurial activities in India, the situation indicates that regions of origin and the families of Indian professionals might benefit most from these transnational practices and investments and from the businesses established.

### 9.3. Discussion on the development outcomes for Germany

Public discussions in Germany address migration's development potential for the country in different ways.

#### 9.3.1. Addressing demographic issues and strengthening competitiveness

In some public discussions, high-skilled migrants in particular are perceived as beneficial for addressing present and future demographic issues, as well as for economic and technological development, especially in sectors where labor shortages already exist (Hinte, Rinne & Zimmermann, 2012). As noted above, they are also seen as crucial for confronting issues related to competitiveness in the global economy (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2011), a perspective that was also shared by the majority of the experts and company representatives who were interviewed. In this fashion, the findings indicate that Indian high-skilled migrants also represent important gatekeepers for German companies wanting to invest in India or internationally, because most of the Indian high-skilled migrants have extensive work experience either in international companies or in different countries.

#### 9.3.2. Increasing diversity through Indian migrants in companies and society

In addition, many experts have argued that the immigration of students and professionals from India promotes societal development, because it not only fosters diversity in society, but also exposes the public to diversity, which

changes perceptions about foreigners as people get to know each other. Moreover, some interviewees said that incoming international students are a unique opportunity for universities to create new institutional structures reflecting the global trend toward the internationalization of education. The internationalization process would not only serve those who are not involved in migration, but would also provide new opportunities for Germans to study and graduate abroad; it would thus also help create a more open-minded and tolerant society, one enriched by the new perspectives of those who return after temporarily residing abroad.

Finally, several company representatives said that Indian professionals are highly beneficial especially for German SMEs because they help develop intercultural competences and skills among German employees. In addition, due to the extensive international work experience many Indian professionals have, they bring new ideas and mindsets to German companies, which fosters innovation and introduces new strategies for resolving technical issues. According to these representatives, German employees' intercultural skills training and the fresh ideas introduced by Indian professionals are highly relevant for remaining competitive in the globalized world. This especially holds true for Germany, because the country's economy is mainly based on exports of high technology.

#### 9.3.3. Uneven access to Indian employees

These insights also reflect unequal conditions in Germany with regard to the recruitment of Indian professionals in terms of geography, sector and company size. In the geographic dimension, this means that companies in Germany tend to be concentrated in urban areas, particularly in big cities, which are often situated in western and southern Germany. As our findings show, Indian migrants tend to move less frequently to rural areas and peripheral regions. Accordingly, companies located in these areas are mostly excluded from the innovation conveyed by migrants and from the intercultural exchange that results from the interaction of migrants and locals. In the sectoral dimension, this means that certain industries are privileged compared to others. This is the case because immigration from India is mostly concentrated in bottleneck occupations. Thus, companies not involved in these sectors are disadvantaged and do not benefit in the same way that industries such as the IT and the engineering sectors do. Finally, inequality is also likely to relate to the size of the enterprise. As our findings show, SMEs are still reluctant to employ foreign high-skilled personnel,

including from India, because employers are unsure of the foreign professionals' technical knowledge, language skills and capacity to integrate into the company culture. This uncertainty is also most likely related to the expected financial expenditures and administrative effort as well as the lack of institutional support and information. Since large companies are not only more experienced but also have the necessary financial and administrative resources, they are able to organize the recruitment of foreign professionals internally. This is likely to lead to competitive disadvantages for SMEs, which predominantly depend on innovation in the production process because they are not in a position to invest broadly in other strategies such as marketing. There are two questions that remain unanswered in this sphere. First, how do these differences related to geography, sector and size affect the economic situation of SMEs presently and how will they do so in the future? Second, as SMEs are particularly important for the German economy, how will the lack of innovative insights transferred by Indian migrants affect the development of the German economy as a whole over the long term?

## 10. Conclusions

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The major objective of this report was to provide insights into the life worlds of current international students and highly-skilled migrants from India in Germany, as well as to offer inputs about the experiences that experts and company representatives had with the respective migrants and related policies in Germany. From a triple-win perspective, the study was particularly interested in the reasons why Indian students and professionals decided to select Germany as a destination, the factors that might influence the duration of stay and the development potential that the migration of Indian students and professionals has for migrants, India and Germany.

It is worth adding that immigration can relieve the demographic pressures expected in the future and help strengthen the economy in Germany, to which Indian students and professionals also contribute. Therefore, a better understanding of the factors that influence the decisions to choose Germany as a destination and the intentions to stay in the country can be used to improve political measures and to increase the attractiveness of Germany as a country of destination for a long-term stay.

As considered in the introduction to this study, the empirical findings indicate that highly diverse and sometimes interrelated economic, cultural, social and political aspects can influence migrants' choice of Germany as a destination and their length of stay. These aspects relate to the migrants themselves, to India as country of origin and to Germany as country of destination.

### **Career development as personal factor for choosing and staying in Germany**

Starting with aspects on the personal level, the prospect of social mobility was an important factor for choosing Germany for 12 out of the 21 students and professionals interviewed. With respect to the duration of stay, however, social mobility was experienced differently; while 45 per

cent of the interviewees had quite positive experiences and aimed to stay for a longer period of time, others were disappointed and sought alternatives. Unfulfilled plans for their time in Germany frequently led them to reconsider the duration of their stay in the country. As noted in Chapter 5, many Indian migrants prefer to go to English-speaking countries, such as the UK or US, since the majority of Indians learn English at an early age in India. However, studying in these countries is often not affordable, especially for Indian students from the middle class, which means low tuition fees are one reason for choosing Germany, a situation that can have unfavourable impacts for the careers of migrants. For instance, this can mean that negative experiences in terms of social mobility can be strongly linked to deficiencies in German language skills, something that was confirmed by 10 interviewees. This issue seems to be particularly relevant for Indian professionals in sectors other than IT and particularly in small-scale enterprises. Many international students also saw the limited number of seminars provided in English as a challenge during their university studies.

### **Gaining independence as influencing aspect for staying in Germany**

Next to career advancement and economic income as aspects of social mobility, personal development and emancipation from parents were also often highlighted as being linked to social mobility, influencing the desire to stay in Germany. This is of particular relevance for 40 per cent of the younger migrants interviewed, particularly students, as well as for female professionals.

### **Class background as mechanism for selecting Germany**

The survey reveals that, for Indian migrants, there are also many aspects relating to India that influence the selection of destination country and the duration of stay.



For example, our findings show that the class background of the families of Indian international students can greatly influence the selection of Germany as a destination country. This is the result of low tuition fees and the relatively strong reputation of several educational fields in Germany such as engineering. In terms of Indian professionals, intra-company transfers are also a determining factor for choosing Germany. This was the case for three out of five intra-company transferees interviewed for the study.

### **Social responsibilities in India as influencing intentions to stay**

Evidence shows that, in particular, social responsibilities in India (e.g. parents or nuclear families) and the strong identification with India can have a significant influence on migrants' intentions to stay; together with immigration-related restrictions in Germany, these are perceived as highly relevant reasons for leaving Germany. While one-third of all interviewees said that social responsibilities in India help determine the length of stay in Germany, half said that loyalty to India is an important factor for returning there. These factors clearly reveal the significance of transnational bonds, which play a role for many Indian interviewees in their everyday lives and which clearly affect their future plans.

### **Germany's very favorable reputation as selection criteria**

The study also shows that various factors related to Germany affect its selection as a destination and the length of stay, for example the country's positive reputation, which results, in the case of students, from its low tuition fees and the high quality of its university programs, and, in the case of professionals, from the attractiveness of certain economic sectors and the favorable circumstances for social mobility. Both students and high-skilled migrants feel large German cities offer positive career opportunities and a cosmopolitan environment. Germany's good reputation, including its low tuition fees, might explain the fact, discussed above, that more and more Indian students and professionals have come to Germany in recent years.

### **Integration into society as influencing length of stay**

Diverse aspects of cultural integration, including integration into German society, also impact intentions relating to the length of stay. For example, the integration of Indian migrants' children into the school system is an important factor, one considered by many migrants as

essential when considering their length of stay. Moreover, bureaucratic procedures were perceived in distinct ways among the interviewees: 90 per cent of the migrants interviewed and 20 per cent of the employers perceived them as significant obstacles to integration. In turn, others said that they were relatively simple in comparison to other countries. The recognition of formal qualifications as a prerequisite for entering the labor market was considered challenging, particularly for those professionals who studied in non-European countries. In many cases, migrants' perceptions of bureaucratic procedures were influenced by the support they received from companies and their own networks, and were affected by previous migration experiences and the level of their German language skills.

### **Integration in the labor market and companies as a factor influencing length of stay**

Regarding working conditions, 50 per cent of the interviewed professionals expressed satisfaction with company structures, while the other half felt those structures hindered their careers. In contrast, German employers are generally satisfied with both the commitment and performance of Indian high-skilled workers. Some experts felt Indian professionals were less advantaged when it comes to their work situation, especially when contrasted with local employees. Moreover, more than 30 per cent of students and 50 per cent of experts linked the difficulties international students have accessing internship positions with the resulting challenges of labor market integration, because, for example, the lack of access to adequate training positions often results in problematic school-to-work transitions. Although many employers appreciated the existing competences of Indian professionals, in three cases there were issues with the recognition of skills and competences by the migrant's company. These problems were perceived as even more challenging when German language skills were deficient or when support from friends, co-nationals and companies was absent. The discussion on these aspects of social integration shows how different factors on the personal level relating to India and to Germany can be closely intertwined.

In sum, it can be argued the study's results explain two major trends discussed in Chapter 4. First, the findings show that several factors, such as class background and the favorable reputation of German companies and universities, have led to a gradual increase in Indian migration to Germany. Second, the findings reveal that there are

many interrelated factors that might explain why Indian professionals in particular soon return to India or migrate to another country. These factors relate to prospects for career development, responsibilities in India and the integration into German society and its labor markets by migrants and their family members.

Next to these findings on the influencing factors for choosing Germany and staying in the country, the study also provides insights into the development outcomes that are especially relevant for creating a triple-win situation.

### Outcomes and inequalities for Indian migrants

In this vein, many of the previously discussed aspects influencing the choice of Germany as a destination by Indian migrants and the duration of their stay are also related to development outcomes. This means that these aspects of social mobility which are often not considered in the literature – such as the environment, infrastructure and independence from parents and social norms in India – are highly important outcomes for Indian students and professionals. However, factors also exist which hamper the social mobility of migrants and which are linked to social inequality. On the personal level, this is expressed in the availability of social capital as a form of support. This means that, in contrast to others, those who have access to social capital have fewer issues relating to institutions, struggle less during the social integration process and are involved more in social relationships. Consequently, they are better positioned to experience social mobility than those who do not have this type of support.

### Development opportunities and challenges for India

Regarding the development outcomes for India, the study also provides some preliminary insights reflecting the broader discourse on migration and development. In contrast to other discussions which predominately focus on financial remittances, the findings here show that among the Indian migrants studied, financial transfers are either reverse, as in the case of students who receive money from home, or sporadic. Social remittances are thus relevant in different directions. The study shows that, particularly among professionals, these remittances often flow between Germany, India and previous destination countries. Moreover, the circulation of ideas is often related to ideas about new start-ups in India or about the exchange of technical knowledge. However, these transnational activities are also a selective process, because not all migrants are included in transnational

social spaces. Although there are not yet any concrete insights on if and how social remittances help found new enterprises in India or their role in transnational labor opportunities, this situation indicates social disparities. This means that not only do members of transnational networks benefit from the outcomes of these types of brain circulation, so do the regions in India where the potential entrepreneurial investments are made. These flows might be even more unequal given that transnational activities between Germany and India are linked to the brain circulation, discussed above, between the US and India, which would concentrate economic and political power in the hands of a limited number of transnational or return migrants from certain regions in India. Multi-site research would be required to gain appropriate information on social remittances, research that would have to focus on migrants, returnees, onward migrants and relevant non-migrants, along with their frequent transactions, including transnational practices. Moreover, field work in different regions in India would be needed to address the differences in territorial development effects between locations where outmigration levels are high and those where they are quite low.

### Development potentials and challenges for Germany

With regard to the developmental outcomes for Germany, it can be concluded that the country definitely benefits from Indian immigration, which compensates for demographic issues, especially in sectors where occupation bottlenecks already exist. The country also profits from the arrival of personnel who often strengthen its competitiveness in the global economy, not only because they work in sectors crucial for remaining competitive, but also because many of the professionals have very solid insights to offer from other companies in other countries. On the other hand, several experts and company representatives said that high-skilled migrants can also help develop intercultural competences and skills among German employees. Nonetheless, as is true elsewhere, this can lead to differences among companies in Germany. This is the case because many Indian high-skilled migrants are recruited by large companies and very few are hired by SMEs. Additionally, many Indians are occupied in certain bottleneck sectors and prefer to reside in metropolitan areas. This means that inequalities exist insofar as Indian migrants are unequally distributed among German enterprises. Those SMEs located in rural areas or small cities in peripheral regions seem to be especially disadvantaged, as do those involved in sectors not identified as bottleneck sectors. This is because they

cannot profit from the innovations, intercultural exchange and experiences that Indian professionals often convey. The discussion on developmental outcomes also shows that various influencing aspects must be considered within the triple-win framework. It also shows that results are not always completely favorable for migrants, countries of origin and countries of destination. In this study we have discussed different challenges by employing the concept of social inequality, through which we examined the ways in which access to resources, opportunities and rewards can be distributed unequally in the context of Indian migration to Germany.

In this fashion, the discussion of the findings suggests that a more considered and balanced focus should be put on creating a triple win situation: Next to the outcomes of migration for some of the people, companies and regions involved, other aspects need to be addressed that prevent people, companies and regions from enjoying the same outcomes, aspects such as class background, unequal access to supportive networks, and the geographical location of companies, universities and local people. As noted at the beginning of this study, this seems especially relevant when creating immigration policies designed to achieve fair migration outcomes.

# 11. Recommendations for policy-makers and employers

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As immigration statistics clearly indicate, Germany has become an increasingly attractive destination for professionals and students from India in recent years. The number of migrants from India living in Germany increased from almost 32,000 in 1990 to 68,000 in 2015, a rise of more than 100,79 per cent (UN DESA, 2015). In 2014, 96.5 per cent of Indian labour migrants were high-skilled. (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2015b). In parallel, India was the second most important origin country of international students in Germany in 2015 (Heublein et al., 2016). In addition, there also seems a trend towards longer stays of both international students and high-skilled migrants from India in Germany, while the share of international students who stay is much higher than the share of high-skilled migrants. 29 per cent of the students from India who arrived in 2010 left Germany again between 2010 and 2012, as opposed to 69 per cent of the high-skilled migrants. From those Indian students who had arrived in 2014, only 20 per cent had left again until the beginning of 2017<sup>8</sup> in contrast to 58 per cent of the high-skilled migrants during the same time span (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2016a).

The empirical findings presented above show that, in general, Germany has a positive image in terms of career opportunities; it is also seen to offer quality of life in a pleasant and safe environment. Yet our interviews indicate that, despite these favorable perceptions, a large number of professionals still consider their stay in Germany to be temporary. Likewise, many international students from India plan to continue their career elsewhere after graduation or after some first experiences on the German labour market. While some plan to return to India for professional or private reasons, others intend to move on to other destinations, mainly the US or the UK. This seems to be an important issue for the German economy, because Indian professionals and students, as future professionals, represent a migrant group which has considerable potential

to contribute to the country's competitiveness in the global market. Additionally, this might have implications for societal developments, because migrants in general and Indian professionals and students in particular help compensate for demographic issues.

Some of the motives for leaving Germany in the short or medium term are related to personal life priorities, such as the wish to live in India or in a country with a larger and stronger Indian migrant community. Nevertheless, some of the perceived negative aspects of life in Germany, such as the high levels of bureaucracy and the difficulties experienced in the transition from study to work, also affect decisions about moving to Germany and the length of stay there. They can be addressed by appropriate government policies and company initiatives, as suggested in the remainder of this section. This is of particular importance in light of increasing anti-immigrant sentiments and the rise in the number of violent racist attacks, particularly in economically underdeveloped regions in Eastern Germany.

Based on these general considerations and on the particular findings presented in this report, the following recommendations can be formulated for policy-makers and potential employers, and for the universities at which students from India study:

## 11.1. Policy recommendations

### Strengthen efforts to recruit prospective students and professionals in India

- The initiative "Make it in Germany" is a particularly well-known source of online information. However, information and promotional events must be offered on site in strategic locations in India in order to increase awareness of Germany as an attractive destination country. The existing online database should be updated

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8 Data for 2017 considered until February 28.

to reflect the most relevant professions in which Indian migrants are involved.

### Facilitate arrival in Germany

- Bureaucratic procedures related to visa applications are often tedious and time-consuming, as are procedures related to the recognition of formal qualifications, particularly those obtained in non-EU countries. These procedures potentially prevent students from starting university and professionals from beginning work assignments on time. Measures should therefore be implemented that facilitate and shorten these procedures. Measures should also make the implementation of laws more uniform and increase clarity about the length of and the elements required in the procedure for recognizing qualifications.
- Formal documents and consultations with public officials should be available in different languages. German language skills are important for social integration. However, migrants who have recently arrived are often particularly overwhelmed by bureaucratic procedures that take place in German, leading to frustration and sometimes premature departures. Therefore, it is important to 1) provide adequate training to public officials dealing with foreigners, and 2) translate relevant documents, at least into English.
- While the online platform of the “Make it in Germany” initiative provides much useful information related to migrants’ stays in Germany, its scope should be broadened. In particular, concrete options for receiving support in dealing with the practical aspects of life in Germany would be useful, for instance those related to completing bureaucratic procedures.

### Facilitate labor market integration and ensure labor rights

- The search for a job after graduation is an important part of the transition to the world of work, one that can increase uncertainty about the chances of finding adequate employment in the German labor market. In addition to having adequate legal conditions in place, both international graduates and potential employers should be provided with information about post-graduation stays in Germany. This might involve providing access to employment databases or training about the work culture in German companies, which

is often different from the university context. It might also include institutional support for helping students find internship positions while they are still studying, or other ways of connecting students with potential future employers, such as job fairs and information events at universities. Additionally, programs could be implemented to facilitate communication and knowledge transfer between Indian employees and Indian students. Policies should support cooperation among the relevant actors so they can facilitate the transition to the labor market and familiarize students with cultural and social life in Germany. One good practice here is the network *Beratungsnetzwerk Willkommenskultur für ausländische Studierende*. If the German government were to support and expand these kinds of initiatives, it would likely encourage Indian students to remain in the country for the long-term after graduation. There is also a need for technical language training. While basic language training is mostly provided, there is a lack of language courses designed for the communication needs of specific industries. These courses could also be offered prior to departure from India, as high-skilled migrants and international students are often occupied after they arrive in Germany with other issues related to their work or studies and with getting settled. Support should also be given to accompanying family members: The well-being of the spouses and children of Indian high-skilled migrants is an important factor in decisions about how long the family stays in Germany. In addition to legal conditions that allow spouses to work, the infrastructure must be put in place that makes it possible to work and raise a family in Germany. This includes international schools and kindergartens, in smaller cities as well as large, along with childcare services. In addition, measures to bring high-skilled spouses in contact with potential employers could be implemented either independently of or in combination with measures supporting the labor market integration of Indian students in Germany.

- Measures should be put in place to ensure equal pay for Indian and German professionals with equal levels of experience and in equal positions. Wage dumping is not only disadvantageous to those who work under such conditions, it is also harmful for social cohesion and the social integration of foreign professionals. High-skilled migrants should be provided with more information about their rights and about the salary standards in the sectors they are working in. This information should be provided prior to departure for Germany.

### Provide opportunities for family members

- Spouses and children of high-skilled migrants and international students need support in gaining access to the labor market and adequate educational institutions. Satisfaction with quality of life is an important aspect of personal well-being and it impacts decisions about the length of stay.
- More must be done to allow members of the extended family to enter Germany. The most important reason why Indian professionals and students decide to return to India is the wish to live close to parents and other family members and the social obligation to take care of them in the future. Decisions to remain in Germany could be fostered by issuing more flexible types of visas allowing longer stays or circular movements for parents, in-laws and siblings.

### Explore the potential benefits for SMEs and economically weak areas in Germany

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employing Indian professionals should be provided with better information and greater support. Many Indian professionals in Germany work in multinational, Indian and large German companies or in recently founded start-ups. SMEs, which are still a key part of the German economy, attract fewer Indian professionals, which might be related to the companies' lack of experience hiring foreign employees. Information and support for SMEs with respect to the employment of Indian professionals could benefit the German economy in the long run by merging the experience of established companies with the innovation potential of professionals from India. Job fairs and other events could be organized involving SMEs interested in recruiting Indian professionals. Moreover, programs providing advice for SMEs about the steps required for recruiting and employing high-skilled migrants from India would also be valuable.
- The flow of professionals to smaller cities and rural areas should be encouraged. Big cities and metropolitan regions, particularly in the west and south of Germany, attract the majority of Indian professionals and students. As a consequence, economically weaker areas of Germany do not benefit from the knowledge exchange and innovation potential of high-skilled migrants.

## 11.2. Recommendations for employers and universities

- Be explicit about the length of the contract in Germany: Intra-company transferees and international contract workers are usually recruited for the completion of a project. This often involves uncertainty about the actual length of stay in Germany, especially when contracts are prolonged in the course of the assignment. This is problematic in terms of moving spouses and children from India to Germany and the planning of the stay in a family context.
- Expand integration measures at companies and universities: Existing initiatives and efforts fostering the interaction and exchange between international and local students and professionals are important for facilitating mutual understanding. These initiatives should be strengthened and broadened, and promote an exchange at both the professional and the personal level. The organization of social events, which could include accompanying family members, would represent a first step in enhancing this exchange. In addition, buddy programs for international students could be developed or fostered.
- Cooperation between companies and between companies and universities: Study-to-work transitions are always critical moments in which decisions about staying or leaving are made. Many students do not have access to companies interested in what they can potentially offer. Thus, networks should be built between companies and, to enhance communication, between companies and universities. This includes supporting the search for adequate internship opportunities while students are still at university. Employers and universities could also engage in and broaden the scope of existing initiatives such as the network *Beratungsnetzwerk Willkommenskultur für ausländische Studierende* mentioned above.
- Support families: Supportive measures offered by employers and educational institutions need to consider the importance of spouses and children for successful integration into the German labor market and society.

This study contributes to the knowledge of what motivates Indian high-skilled migrants and international students to come to Germany, and of their intentions regarding their length of stay. The in-depth analysis of the multiple viewpoints, which are based on interviews with migrants,

employers and experts, provides clear insights into the opportunities and obstacles migrants face before their arrival in Germany and at different stages during their stay. As the findings suggest, in some areas there is a need for better communication between stakeholders, including migrants, employers and administrative institutions. Keeping this general finding in mind, policy-makers, employers and educational institutions can help promote positive outcomes for Indian migrants and their families, and for German and Indian society. However, more research is needed in order to gain an in-depth understanding of various issues revealed in this study, including the differences between working cultures in India and Germany, how to match university graduates and potential employers, and the importance of family relations in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, the design of this study does not allow extensive conclusions about the development potential of Indian high-skilled and student migration to Germany. At the same time, further research should reflect the growing importance of Germany as a destination country for Indian migrants and the potential it offers for some segments of Indian society.



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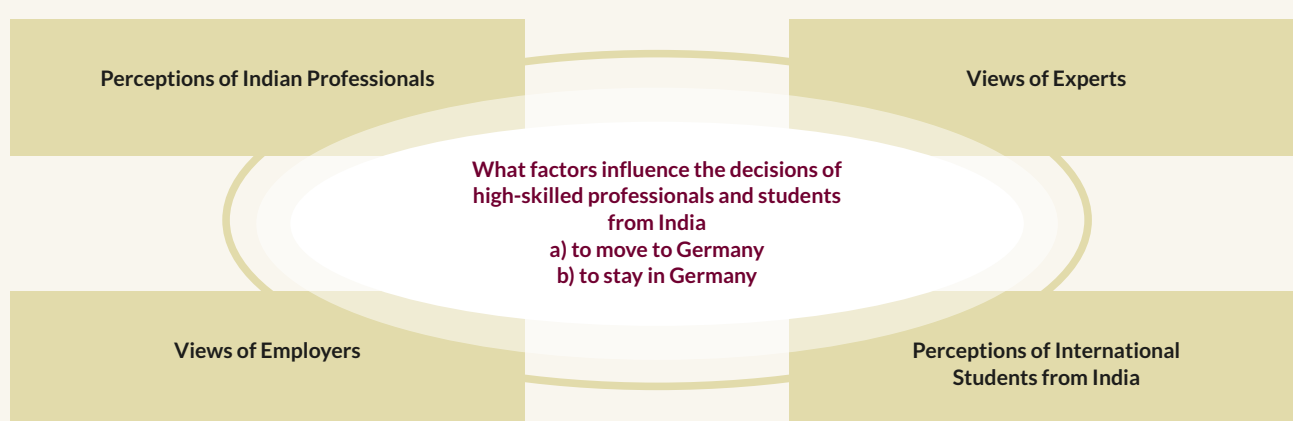
# Annex

## 1. Research design

The objective of the present study is to use qualitative research methods to focus on the different reasons why Indian students and high-skilled migrants select Germany as a destination country and on the factors that influence the duration of their stay, as well as the potential development outcomes that Indian migration to Germany implies. The use of qualitative research in migration studies is sufficient when researchers intend to investigate the perceptions, experiences and motivations of migrants (Castles, 2012). One common research method in qualitative studies is the semi-structured interview. As opposed to standardized interviews or questionnaires, semi-structured interviews allow respondents to more easily express their subjective opinions (Flick, 2016). To obtain insights from different perspectives, we conducted 40 semi-structured interviews: 12 interviews with Indian high-skilled professionals, 9 with international students, 8 with representatives of companies which employ Indian professionals and 11 with experts from different parts of

Germany. In particular, we asked high-skilled professionals and international students about their reasons for choosing Germany for work or study, their migration experience, their satisfaction with their professional and their private life, their social contacts in Germany and India, and their future plans. This information was complemented by and partially contrasted with the opinion of company representatives; the focus of these interviews lay on the representatives' experiences of collaboration between professionals from India and Germany and their assessment of the opportunities and challenges related to the career development and life satisfaction of Indian professionals and their families in Germany. Finally, we conducted interviews with a diverse range of experts, including academics, policy-makers and representatives of civil society organizations. The empirical results were analyzed and, when appropriate, compared within and between the categories of interviewees. This approach allowed us to elaborate on converging and diverging aspects in order to reveal contradictory perspectives on the investigated topic, as well as the resulting challenges.

FIGURE 11 The empirical study's research design



Source: Authors



The transcribed interviews were coded using a predominantly inductive approach, but based on a coding frame which allows answers to be given to the two research questions presented in Figure 9. Particular attention was paid to the respondents' answers related to 1) the choice of Germany as a destination, and 2) the intentions regarding the length of stay in Germany.

## 2. Information sheet

### Indian high-skilled Migrants and International Students in Germany – Migration Behaviours, Intentions and Development Potential

We are looking for interviewees from companies in Germany that employ Indians, Indian high-skilled employees in Germany, Indian and multi-national companies, as well as Indian international students currently studying in Germany.

With a population of 1.2 billion and one million engineers, who incorporate every year in the labor market, India is expected to continue to be an important source of skilled labor. Since the implementation of the Green Card initiative (2000–2004) of the Federal Government, the migration of highly-skilled Indians to Germany has increased significantly. It can be argued that international labor mobility can potentially disembody in a Triple Win situation, meaning that international migrants as well as receiving and sending countries can benefit.

The research literature on migration experiences of employed Indians in Germany is scarce. There is also a lack in the analyses of the experiences of companies that have employed Indian professionals. Our study, carried out by the Bielefeld University, aims to shed light on these aspects. Based on the empirical results of the study, policy and business recommendations will be derived.

In the study, anonymous semi-structured interviews (in English or German) with representatives of companies employing Indians, experts, Indian high-skilled immigrants and international students will be conducted in Germany. We would be very happy about your willingness to participate in the research and to share your experiences with us.

If you are interested to participate in the study, we would appreciate your feedback either directly with Daniela Röß of the Bertelsmann Foundation ([daniela.roess@bertelsmann-stiftung.de](mailto:daniela.roess@bertelsmann-stiftung.de), 0172-2782234), with Dr. Mustafa Aksakal ([mustafa.aksakal@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:mustafa.aksakal@uni-bielefeld.de), 0521-1064638) or with Dr. Kerstin Schmidt ([kerstin.schmidt1@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:kerstin.schmidt1@uni-bielefeld.de), 0521-1064638) of the University of Bielefeld.

### 3. Interview guideline: international students

#### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is your year of birth?
2. When did you come to Germany?
3. Do you think that your German language skills are sufficiently developed in order to cope with life in Germany?
4. What are you studying? Are your studies your main purpose of stay in Germany?
5. Did you study or work elsewhere before coming to Germany? What was the motivation?
6. Do you have a spouse and/or children? If yes: Where do they live?

#### B. REASONS FOR CHOOSING GERMANY AND ARRIVAL

7. Why did you choose Germany as a destination? Why your current university/institute?
8. Did you have other options? If yes: which ones?
9. Can you describe your experiences with the bureaucratic process for visa application and university entrance?
10. Did you receive support when you arrived? If yes: From whom? How?

#### C. SATISFACTION WITH STUDY, LIFE IN GERMANY AND ADAPTATION

11. How satisfied are you with your studies?
12. What are your experiences with internships in Germany?
13. Are you satisfied with your current living conditions? Why? Would you like to change anything?
14. What kind of personal attachments do you have in Germany?
15. Do you feel equally treated in comparison to other students?
16. Did you ever experience discrimination in everyday life and/or by formal institutions?
17. Do the recent right-wing movements have an influence on your decision to be here?
18. What is important to you and to your spouse regarding the education of your children and can those expectations be realised in Germany?

#### D. TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT

19. Where do you feel at home?
20. If you compare Germany and India/previous country of residence, what is different?
21. Based on these previous considerations, do you miss anything?
22. Do you maintain any contacts with people in India or in other past destinations, If yes: Who? How? How often?
23. Do you have relatives or other persons who need your help or care in your home country? If yes: Do you help them?
24. Do you receive any kind of support from home?
25. What are the consequences of your living abroad to your relationships in India?

#### E. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

26. If you could go back in time, would you come here again? What would you do differently?
27. Thinking about your migration decision, what did you see as the advantages and risks of migrating before coming to Germany? Were these expectations fulfilled?

#### F. FUTURE PLANS

28. Do you intend to return to India, go somewhere else, or stay in Germany in the near future? What skills and competences have you gained that qualifies you to work in Germany?
29. What weight has social responsibilities in India for your decision regarding the length of stay in Germany?

## 4. Interview guideline: high-skilled migrants

### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is your year of birth?
2. When did you come to Germany?
3. In what branch are you working? Is your work your main purpose of stay in Germany?
4. Do you think that your German language skills are sufficiently developed in order to cope with life in Germany?
5. Did you study or work elsewhere before coming to Germany? Where? What was the motivation?
6. Do you have a spouse and/or children? If yes: Where do they live? What does your spouse do?

### B. REASONS FOR CHOOSING GERMANY AND ARRIVAL

7. Why did you choose Germany as particular destination? Why your current employer?
8. Did you have other options? If yes: Which ones?
9. Can you describe your experiences with the bureaucratic process for the visa application and the recognition of your qualifications?
10. Did you receive support when you arrived? If yes: From whom? How?

### C. SATISFACTION WITH WORK AND LIFE IN GERMANY AND ADAPTATION

11. How would you define your work conditions? What is, in your opinion, the main difference between the Indian and German work culture?
12. Does your present work make your career development possible?
13. What kind of personal attachments do you have in Germany?
14. Are you satisfied with your living conditions?
15. Do you feel that you are equally treated in comparison to your colleagues in the work place? If not: Why?
16. Did you ever experience discrimination in everyday life and/or by formal institutions?
17. Do the recent right-wing movements have an influence on your decision to be here?
18. What is important to you and your spouse regarding the education of your children and can those expectations be realized in Germany?

### D. TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT

19. Where do you feel at home?
20. If you compare Germany and India/previous country of residence, what is different?
21. Based on the previous consideration, do you miss anything?
22. Do you maintain contacts with people in India or in other past destination? If yes: Who? How? How often?
23. Do you have relatives or other persons who need your help or care in your home country? If yes: Do you help them?
24. What are the consequences of your living abroad to your relationships in India?
25. Do you frequently visit India? For what reason?

### E. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

26. If you could go back in time, would you come here again? What would you do differently?
27. Thinking about your migration decision, what did you see as the advantages and risks of migrating before coming to Germany? Were these expectations fulfilled?

### F. FUTURE PLANS

28. Do you intend to return to India, go somewhere else or stay in Germany in the near future? Under what conditions would you choose one of these options?
29. What weight has social responsibilities in India for your decisions regarding the length of stay in Germany?

## 5. Interview guideline: employer

### A. ALLGEMEINE INFORMATIONEN/ VORBETRACHTUNGEN

1. Könnten Sie bitte Ihr Unternehmen und Ihre Funktion darin kurz beschreiben?
2. Seit wann beschäftigen Sie ausländische Arbeitnehmer/-Innen, insbesondere hochqualifizierte indische Migrant/-Innen (HIM)? Wie viele sind in Ihrem Unternehmen beschäftigt und wie ist der Trend bzgl. der Zahlen?
3. Mit welchen Aufgaben sind HIMs in Ihrem Unternehmen vor allem betraut?

### B. WAHRNEHMUNG ÜBER INDISCHE HOCHQUALIFIZIERTE IM UNTERNEHMEN

4. Erfüllen die formalen Qualifikationen der HIMs die Ansprüche an hochqualifizierte Mitarbeiter/-Innen in Ihrem Unternehmen? Inwiefern?
5. Welche persönlichen Einstellungen und Kompetenzen werden in Ihrem Unternehmen von Arbeitnehmer/-Innen besonders erwartet?
6. Wie sind die Erfahrungen in Ihrem Unternehmen mit hochqualifizierten ausländischen Migrant/-Innen, und insbesondere HIMs, bezüglich dieser Einstellungen und Kompetenzen?
7. Wie beurteilen Sie das Arbeitsklima in Ihrem Unternehmen, insbesondere in den Bereichen in denen HIMs, Migrant/-Innen aus anderen Ländern und deutsche Arbeitnehmer/-Innen zusammenarbeiten?
8. Bietet Ihr Unternehmen Aktivitäten und Initiativen zur Verbesserung der Integration der HIMs in Ihr Unternehmen? Falls ja: Welche und wie werden diese angenommen? Falls nein: Würden Sie ein solches Angebot für sinnvoll halten?

### C. BERUFLICHE CHANCEN INDISCHER HOCHQUALIFIZIERTER IM UNTERNEHMEN

9. Wie werden HIMs in Ihrem Unternehmen rekrutiert? Gibt es Besonderheiten im Rekrutierungsprozess im Vergleich zu anderen ausländischen Arbeitnehmer/-Innen?
10. Wie beurteilen Sie die Beschäftigungsdauer/Fluktuationsrate bei indischen Arbeitnehmer/-Innen in Ihrem Unternehmen? Wie erklären Sie sich dies?

11. Welche besonderen beruflichen Perspektiven bietet Ihr Unternehmen hochqualifizierten Migrant/-Innen? Sehen Sie besondere Chancen für HIMs?
12. Wie werden diese Chancen den einzelnen Arbeitnehmer/-innen vermittelt und angenommen?

### D. WAHRNEHMUNG INDISCHER MIGRANT/-INNEN IN DER ÖFFENTLICHKEIT

13. Wie werden hochqualifizierte Migrant/-innen in der Öffentlichkeit und in den Medien wahrgenommen? Gibt es Besonderheiten im Hinblick auf HIMs?
14. Erkennt Ihrer Meinung nach die aktuelle Immigrationspolitik das Potenzial hochqualifizierter Migrant/-innen in Deutschland? Gibt es Besonderheiten im Hinblick auf HIMs?

### E. HERAUSFORDERUNGEN FÜR INDISCHE MIGRANT/-INNEN

15. Gibt es Ihrer Meinung nach besondere Herausforderungen, vor denen hochqualifizierte Migrant/-innen im deutschen Arbeitsmarkt stehen? Gibt es Besonderheiten im Hinblick auf HIMs?
16. Sind Ihnen besondere Probleme Ihrer Arbeitnehmer im alltäglichen Leben bekannt?
17. Welchen Einfluss haben negative Erfahrungen im alltäglichen Leben, ihres Erachtens nach, auf die Aufenthalts- bzw. Beschäftigungsdauer in Deutschland?
18. Wie könnte diesen Problemen Ihrer Meinung nach begegnet werden? Denken Sie, dass Ihr Unternehmen dazu einen Beitrag leisten kann? Falls ja: Welchen? Falls nein: Warum nicht?

### F. AUSBLICK

19. Glauben Sie, dass die Mobilität von hochqualifizierten Migrant/-Innen, insbesondere von HIMs zukünftig an Bedeutung gewinnen wird?
20. Wie schätzen Sie Deutschlands zukünftige Rolle im globalen Wettbewerb der Fachkräfteanwerbung von hochqualifizierten Migrant/-innen, insbesondere von HIMs, im Vergleich zu anderen Ländern (z.B. USA, UK), ein?
21. Welche Maßnahmen müssen getroffen werden, um hochqualifizierte Fachkräfte langfristig in Deutschland zu halten?

## 6. Interview guideline: experts

### A. ALLGEMEINE INFORMATIONEN/ VORBETRACHTUNGEN

22. Könnten Sie bitte Ihre Organisation/Institution und Ihre Rolle darin kurz beschreiben?
23. Welche Herkunftsländer und Charaktereigenschaften sind im Kontext von hochqualifizierter Migration nach Deutschland von besonderer Bedeutung?
24. Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die wichtigsten Faktoren, die die Aufenthaltsdauer von hochqualifizierten Migrant/-Innen bestimmen?

### B. WAHRNEHMUNG GESELLSCHAFTLICHER CHANCEN

25. Welche Chancen bietet Ihrer Meinung nach die gegenwärtige Migration von Hochqualifizierten nach Deutschland?
26. Erkennt Ihrer Meinung nach die aktuelle deutsche Immigrationspolitik diese Chancen? Welche Stärken, welche Schwächen sehen Sie in ihr?

### C. HERAUSFORDERUNGEN

27. Welche Herausforderungen sehen Sie in Bezug auf hochqualifizierte Migrant/-Innen in Deutschland?
28. Wie beurteilen Sie die institutionellen Herausforderungen bei der Anwerbung und der Integration von hochqualifizierten Immigrant/-Innen in Deutschland?
29. Finden Sie, dass die gegenwärtige deutsche Einwanderungspolitik hochqualifizierte Migrant/-Innen aus unterschiedlichen Herkunftsländern gleich behandelt?
30. Im Hinblick auf diese Einschätzung, wie beurteilen Sie die Position von indischen Fachkräften?
31. Wie schätzen Sie die öffentliche Meinung zur momentanen Immigration von HIMs nach Deutschland ein, insbesondere im Vergleich zur Situation im Jahre 2000?
32. Welche Rolle haben Ihrer Meinung nach die gegenwärtigen xenophoben Tendenzen in Deutschland auf die Aufenthaltsdauer von hochqualifizierten Migrant/-Innen? Welche zukünftigen Entwicklungen sehen Sie da?

### D. SOZIO-ÖKONOMISCHE ASPEKTE

33. Wie schätzen Sie die sozio-ökonomische Lage hochqualifizierter Migrant/-Innen, insbesondere HIMs in Deutschland ein?
34. Haben Ihrer Einschätzung nach hochqualifizierte Migrant/-Innen die gleichen Chancen auf dem deutschen Arbeitsmarkt wie deutsche Staatsbürger/-Innen bzw. wie Menschen, die bereits länger in Deutschland leben?
35. Welche Rolle spielen, Ihrer Meinung nach, institutionelle Programme und Maßnahmen zur Anwerbung hochqualifizierten Migrant/-Innen?
36. Welche Rolle spielen diese Maßnahmen im Hinblick auf die Aufenthaltsdauer von hochqualifizierten Migrant/-Innen in Deutschland?
37. Finden Sie, dass noch Bedarf an weiteren Maßnahmen zur Deckung des Fachkräftemangels in Deutschland besteht? Welche Maßnahmen sehen Sie für die Anwerbung von HIMs als besonders sinnvoll an?

### E. AUSBLICK

38. Glauben Sie, dass die Mobilität von hochqualifizierten Migrant/-Innen, insbesondere von HIMs zukünftig an Bedeutung gewinnen wird?
39. Wie schätzen Sie Deutschlands zukünftige Rolle im globalen Wettbewerb der Fachkräfteanwerbung von hochqualifizierten Migrant/-Innen, im Vergleich zu anderen Ländern (z.B. USA, UK), ein?
40. Welche Maßnahmen müssen getroffen werden, um hochqualifizierte Fachkräfte langfristig in Deutschland zu halten?
41. Welche Rolle spielt eine faire Gestaltung der Migrationspolitik hierbei? Wie könnte diese aussehen?

## 7. Interview partners

Category	Year of birth	Gender
International student 1	1988	Male
International student 2	1987	Female
International student 3	1989	Male
International student 4	1985	Female
International student 5	1992	Female
International student 6	1994	Female
International student 7	1989	Male
International student 8	1991	Female
International student 9	1992	Male
High-skilled migrant 1	1973	Male
High-skilled migrant 2	1979	Male
High-skilled migrant 3	1976	Male
High-skilled migrant 4	1977	Male
High-skilled migrant 5	1978	Female
High-skilled migrant 6	1979	Male
High-skilled migrant 7	1977	Male
High-skilled migrant 8	1979	Female
High-skilled migrant 9	1990	Male
High-skilled migrant 10	1983	Male
High-skilled migrant 11	1981	Male
High-skilled migrant 12	1980	Male
Employer 1		Male
Employer 2		Male
Employer 3		Female
Employer 4		Male
Employer 5		Male
Employer 6		Male
Employer 7		Female
Employer 8		Female
Expert 1		Female
Expert 2		Male
Expert 3		Male
Expert 4		Male
Expert 5		Male
Expert 6		Male
Expert 7		Male
Expert 8		Male
Expert 9		Female
Expert 10		Male
Expert 11		Male
<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>

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